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CONTENTS

COMMENTS . . . . Page 133
DIEPPE AND THE FACTORIES . . . 135
FUEL-POWER AND THE SOVIET STATE. By Maurice Edelman 135
THE CIVIL SERVICE. By Nicholas Davenport 136
A LONDON DIARY. By Critic . . . 136
THIS ENGLAND 137
ORNITHOLOGICAL. By Sagittarius . . 137
PROSPECT FOR RELIGION—II. By C. E. M. Joad 138
WASPS. By Y.Y. 139
THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH. By Desmond MacCarthy 139
AN EEL. By Fanfarlo 140
THE MOVIES. By William Whitebait . 140
TO MAX BEERBOHM, NOW. By Sylvia Sprigge 140
CORRESPONDENCE 141
From K. L. Little; G. Beuer; Konrad Nordahl; Nicholas Davenport; Humphrey Baker; G. W. Orton Smith; Howard Fox, and others
Page
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By G. W. Stonier . 143
REVIEWS:
Rimsky-Korsakov. By Desmond Shawe-Taylor 144
Far Arabia. By Freda White . . . 145
Literary Scholarship. By E. E. Kellett . 146
U.S.S.R. By Leonard Woolf . . . 146
Shorter Notices 146
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS 147

AS THE NAZIS SEE IT

IF you were a German war lord how would this war now look to you? You would be conscious of strains and stresses which each belligerent country is inclined to attribute to itself alone. No German in authority would be under the British illusion that the German organisation runs with smooth efficiency. The brilliance of army organisation would not blind you, if you were a German, to the fact that a country which is now absolute on the Continent still fails to win the allegiance of any but a few of the less reputable, and that the overwhelming majority who are acquiescent to-day would be glad, if they could, to welcome German defeat. Food rations in Germany have again been cut; and, more important, the German housewife cannot get her nominal rations. It can be of no special comfort to a German that people in Greece, in Spain, in Belgium and some other occupied countries are actually starving. The German deduction must be that it is absolutely essential to drive Russia out of the war for effective purposes before another agony of frost and snow tries the German army. General von Bock's armies are advancing rapidly, but is the pace quick enough? Apparently Russians can still start counter-attacks. Last winter, on the evidence of Hitler, Germany nearly cracked under the strain; this year Britain's great raids on German towns has added a new tension. By themselves these are no more likely to lead to breakdown than Germany's raids on Britain in 1940–41, but if the Russians can hold sufficiently to engage the bulk of Germany's forces during the winter, if a Second Front develops on the Atlantic side, then indeed Germany's prospects would be bleak.

German propaganda is naturally a reflection of this situation. The Germans have paid serious attention to the Dieppe raid as a rehearsal for a possible invasion. They have noted that the British fleet was able to make its way through the minefield and maintain its position for nine hours within two miles of the French coast. The air umbrella was a success; it brought down a far larger proportion of the Luftwaffe in France than the Germans care to admit. The land fighting was as costly to both sides as Commando fighting must usually be. As a job of political warfare the raid was a considerable British success. For many weeks now British propaganda has been explaining to the occupied countries how to distinguish between a raid and an invasion. The error of St. Nazaire was not this time repeated. The French were carefully warned not to rise prematurely and in face of this advice Dr. Goebbels made very heavy weather trying to persuade Europe that a British invasion had been attempted and defeated. On the other hand German propaganda could use the Dieppe raid to exploit Russia's disappointment at the absence of a Second Front and further to increase the gap between Russia and Britain, which Mr. Churchill's visit to Moscow was intended to bridge. The first reaction of the Moscow press and radio suggest that Mr. Churchill was no more than partially successful. The Soviet Union is so hard pressed that it is doubtful if anything short of action which would obviously weaken the German thrust will greatly affect Russian public opinion.

It is at this point that our German surveying the field regains confidence and develops a new line of propaganda. With Russia pushed back and German troops transferred to the West, invasion would indeed look almost impossible. If the Russians could be persuaded that the British had let them down, if the British could be persuaded that the liberation of Eastern Europe is beyond their power, can they not be persuaded to make a Nazi peace? The signs accumulate that Hitler will this autumn attempt his biggest peace drive. At the present moment German propaganda to Turkey is explaining for the first time that the Germans could not invade England in 1940 and that the British and Americans cannot invade Hitler's Europe in 1942. Nor, it is added, will it be easy for Germany to invade England. Hence the suggestion that a stalemate in the West is inevitable. It seems that Ribbentrop with his delusions about England still has the Führer's ear; once Churchill and "his clique" are dethroned he believes the British will clear out of the war.

While making these preparations for ending the war in 1942, Hitler completes his plans for the development of the Third Reich. With the removal of Dr. Schlegelberger, as Minister of Justice, and the appointment of Otto Georg Thierack, the last non-Nazi disappears from a position of authority in Germany. The new Minister of Justice, who has been President of the People's Courts, cares nothing for justice. He is, in the Führer's words, to change the law as he likes. There is a change, too, in those who are to carry out this law. Germany suffers from shortage of man-power. Hitler knows well that there are not enough Germans permanently to administer the whole of Europe against the will of the mass of Europeans. Therefore, for the first time in German propaganda, the privileges of the master race are spoken of as being open to all who serve the Führer. A Hungarian and a French Quisling are to be accounted German Aryans, just as, under the rules drawn up for the new S.S. police, all proletarians, democrats and opponents of Hitler within and without Germany, are accounted Bolsheviks to be kept permanently in subjection. The *Schwarze Korps* recently rebuked those who laugh at "Germans" who do not speak German. German propaganda has now moved on to a new conception which is in many ways a ghastly parody of the Roman Empire. Citizenship of the ruling country is to be obtained by service to the Empire; the world is to be controlled and run for the benefit of a ruling group serving the Führer; its power is to be maintained by a pretorian guard or Gestapo, divorced alike from nationality and humanity, entrusted with the duty of keeping in permanent slavery the great majority of mankind, who, for one reason or another, maintain an old-fashioned preference for freedom, national, cultural orec onomic.

What is the answer from this side? According to routine Mr. Churchill would reply with some fine rhetoric and the war continue to be fought exactly as if it were a nationalist war between the

the pre-1914 British and German Empires. But Hitler stands as head of international Fascism. Our reply must be positive, not a blank negation. If the enemy is international Fascism, our allies are democrats and Socialists, wherever they can be found, and we must offer a democratic alternative to the International Gestapo and a Socialist alternative to monopoly Capitalism.

Brazil

Brazil's declaration of war against Germany and Italy has latterly become inevitable; the Axis sinking of Brazilian ships seemed deliberately to invite it. From our point of view the accession of the greatest South American country is a political gain, for it must influence the other Latin-American republics especially Chile, which with Argentina stood out of the declaration of continental solidarity of the Rio Conference. They all have suffered a lavish and brilliantly organised Axis propaganda, whose note has been intimidation rather than flattery. The strategic advantage is more important. Control by the United Nations of the Western side of the " Straits of Dakar " is a safeguard in the Battle of the Atlantic. Americans are far more conscious than we are of that great shoulder of their continent thrust out towards the bulge of Africa; but even we have thought uneasily of seven hours flying time for planes based on Senegal. The airfields and the ports of Brazil are invaluable. It should, however, be noted that no navy, and certainly not the small Brazilian fleet, can patrol that vast coast-line. If there are places where Axis ships are getting oil, they will be very hard to discover and check; and Brazil has plenty of Axis supporters. The Brazilian Government seems quite calm about it, and is rounding up the German and Italian leaders. But Brazil has 600,000 German-born residents, up to 3,000,000 of German descent born in the country; and every man-jack of them has been netted into the Nazi *Aus-Deutsch* organisation. Nobody can tell how many have been forced by fear of death or ruin, but certainly a large number must be genuine Nazis. Very many of them and of the Italian immigrants do not even speak or read Portuguese; the Southern States of Rio Grande and Santa Catharina are almost solidly German. There are besides some quarter of a million Japanese, mostly in Sao Paulo, and as Brazil is not at war with Japan, they are free to do any little jobs which the Germans and Italians find difficulty in accomplishing. The Vargas regime, which is nationalist and roughly Fascist in constitution, has been trying to enforce assimilation of these foreign elements, but without success. President Vargas, among the contemporary crop of dictators, is notable for being a benevolent one. He has refrained from hunting his opponents, and indeed goes out of his way to conciliate them. In consequence he is enormously popular, and is perhaps the only dictator who goes everywhere among the people almost unguarded. The emphasis of official propaganda upon the materials the United States and Britain will get from Brazil has been overdone. Brazil closed down the export of precious metals to Italy by the L.A.T.I. air-line, some months ago: her principal customer has naturally remained the United States, a position hardly affected by the declaration of war.

Why Build Warships?

That the Japanese should have risked a big naval force for the recovery of their lost positions in the Solomons is proof that these islands held a key position in their strategy. Again the Americans won a naval battle without firing a gun. The layman asks once more the question which Admiral Richmond raised twenty years ago: are capital ships anything more than superfluous targets? To-day, however, this disturbing conundrum threatens any warship above the tonnage of a destroyer. We wish we could assume that this American threat to Japan's hold on the Dutch islands were so formidable as to forbid an invasion of Bengal. That would be a too sanguine conclusion. For this event we must be prepared before the end of September. This prospect fills every rational spectator with alarm, for we see no easy way of escape from the political deadlock. In his latest statement to the press even Mr. Rajagopalachari seems to despair of any approach to reason by Indian politicians. His sole hope is now in a miracle, for he talks of an initiative by the British Government. It seems to contemplate the apparent success of its measures of repression with unqualified complacency. Even if Mr. Gandhi's prestige has suffered a heavy blow, it does not follow that Indians like us any better because we have humiliated their hero. The chief result of this wholesale coercion is that we have now closed the yawning gulf within the ranks of Congress which divided Nehru and the younger generation from Gandhi and the prehistoric past. How wide it was few realise: those who wish to understand what is happening should turn to the full report of the debates within the Working Committee last April published by the Union of Democratic Control (34 Victoria Street, S.W.1, price 6*d.*). Protests against the Whipping Order continue to appear. This is as it should be. But past experience suggests that for one person who may be whipped after trial, hundreds will be flogged untried.

Soviet and American Unions

The Trade Union Congress General Council issued this week its annual report, in preparation for the Congress which is to meet in a fortnight's time. The most important section of the report is that which deals with the relations between the British, Soviet and American Trade Union movements. The T.U.C., which has already a joint committee with the Soviet Trade Unions, wants to enlarge this body to include American representatives. But there are difficulties. The American affiliate of the T.U.C. is the American Federation of Labour, which is violently anti-Communist, and still at loggerheads with its rival, the Congress of Industrial Organisations. Instead of dealing with both these bodies in the U.S.A., the British General Council has been trying to persuade the A.F. of L. at once to join hands with the Russians and to sink its differences with the C.I.O. On the latter of these issues, recent reports from America are rather more hopeful than those which reached this country before the breach between John Lewis and the C.I.O. had become complete. But the A.F. of L. seems still to be adamant about linking up with the Soviet Trade Union. The British T.U.C., thwarted in its attempt to create a joint committee representing the three countries, has been trying to constitute itself the liaison between the Americans and the Russians. But the Soviet Trade Union do not like this, and are pressing for a properly representative body drawn from all these. Some observers in the United States hold that Sir Walter Citrine and his colleagues made a mistake in not insisting on negotiating directly with the C.I.O., instead of giving the A.F. of L. what amounted to a veto in any attempt to bring the C.I.O. in. The C.I.O. obviously would be prepared to come into a joint committee with the Russians; if it did, the A.F. of L. probably could not afford to stand aside. Moreover, the C.I.O. is quite plainly the body which stands much the nearer to European working-class ideas and policies. It is whole-hearted for the war, now that John Lewis and his group have left it; and it is likely, as the war goes on, to replace the A.F. of L. to a growing extent as the leader of American working-class opinion. It will be a disaster if the General Council allows its relations with the Soviet Trade Unions to be poisoned by its connection with the reactionary, anti-Socialist leaders of the A.F. of L.

T.U.C. and Education

Together with its annual report, the General Council has circulated its proposals for educational reform. These appear in a remarkably forthright document, which sets out the essentials of a democratic post-war policy in education and pleads forcibly for the endorsement of this policy now, in order that the necessary preparations may be made for getting ahead with it the very moment the war ends. The two things—apart from obstruction by vested interests, which are likely to hold up post-war education are shortage of buildings and shortage of teachers; and of these two the latter is by far the more important. The T.U.C. wants the school leaving age to be raised to 15 as soon as the war ends, and to 16 within three years; and it also wants part-time education for all up to 18 and a great improvement in the provision for full-time secondary education under public auspices. Such a programme is bound to make very heavy demands on the institutions which train teachers—the more so because it is urgently necessary to reduce the size of classes in junior as well as senior schools. Buildings can be improvised, or fabricated quickly of light materials; but the training of teachers is too short at present and cannot be speeded up wihout serious reaction on quality. Frankly, we doubt whether the proposed programme can be carried out in three years. The T.U.C. report is no less forthright on other big issues. It wants to end once and for all the " dual system " by stopping all forms of State aid to denominational schools. It wants maintenance allowances from the age of 11—*i.e.*, in senior schools as well as in secondary schools of the existing types. It is opposed to State aid for any privately owned schools—with a safeguarding clause in favour of schools that are really doing experimental work; and it stands without ambiguity for the " common school " irrespective of social class. This is a notable programme, on which we hope to comment at greater length in the near future. It squares neatly at most points with the programmes put forward a few months ago by the Association of Directors and Secretaries and by the Workers' Educational Association. Except on a few points, progressive educational opinion seems to be fairly well agreed on what it wants. But will the Government accept any such plan as is here advocated? Will it not rather set out, in the name of " national unity " the new name for the sacrosanctity of vested interests—to preserve Church schools and so-called " public " schools against the full hand of democracy by grants of public money, instead of improving the quality of the public educational system?

The Fuel " Target "

The campaign for voluntary fuel economy is now in full swing. Every household is given a " target " for the coming winter, under threat that compulsory rationing will have to come unless consumption is cut by 15 per cent. without it; and to this threat an added vague menace that anyone who fails to economise now *may* be penalised later on when and if compulsory measures are introduced. At the same time it is announced that the attempts to get increased production from the mines under the new control arrangements have so far failed, and that output has actually been going down. This is not serious handling of the problem. The plain truth is that in many areas the miners, who are largely oldish men, are getting tired out, and that exhortations to them to produce more are bound to be ineffective, because they are physically incapable of the required response. The economies which householders are now asked to make are pretty much the same as Sir William Brierley proposed to enforce upon them by rationing; and in view of the outcry provoked by the Beveridge plan it seems highly improbable that the reductions required will be achieved on a voluntary basis.

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

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POSTAGE on this issue is : Inland, 1½d. ; Foreign, 1d. ; Canada, 1d.

DIEPPE AND THE FACTORIES

THE early morning news of the Dieppe raid reached the coalfields, filtered down into the pits, circulated from mouth to mouth along the coal face, growing as it went, until in a couple of hours the men underground believed that the Second Front had been opened at last. As a result, in a single South Wales pit, we are told that output for that day of renewed faith rose from 80 tons to 168 tons. Reports which reach us from pits and factories in other parts of the country suggest that this was not an isolated example. The story is a measure of the possibilities within reach. It is not mere verbiage to speak of the change in atmosphere, the lift of morale, that would be produced if workmen believed that our war effort was co-ordinated with Russia's and that our blood and sweat was being spent in the same agony for the same objects and with the hope of joint victory. The spirit of the Dunkirk days, when similar production increases occurred, can be recaptured. But it can be recaptured not by exhortation, nor pointing with pride to what was accomplished in 1940, but by action and action alone.

That the present state of relative inaction has a lowering effect upon morale and hence upon output in the ranks of the industrial workers, just as grave as the effect in the ranks of the armed forces is certainly true. There is little doubt that present grave discontents, particularly in the mines, would be largely swept away by the enthusiasm with which the miners would greet and support military action corresponding to the instinctive popular demand. Certainly it is deplorable that it should be possible for larger increases in output to be achieved at this time of day; it is a partial indication of the unnecessarily low level of existing production. Cynicism and a sense of frustration are widespread. But the dark patches are not the whole picture; really great progress is being made.

In wartime, official statistics are of necessity very stingy with their information, and so far as particular factories or branches of industry are concerned it is usually the troubles rather than the achievements which get noticed in the newspapers. In the circumstances, the most authoritative reports, which have the advantage of being both highly particularised and yet of general application, are probably those obtained through the agency of the Joint Production Committees. The working and development of the Committees can be taken as at least a rough and partial measure of the progress being made in solving the basic problems of this kind of war; a war in which the interaction of politics and production, and the nature of our society, demand new techniques of management and organisation if our resources are to be mobilised and exploited in the fullest sense of the word.

This month active members of Production Committees in more than a score of leading armament factories in the North of England, employing a total of more than 200,000 men and women, met in Manchester to listen to reports and to compare notes on tasks accomplished and methods found to be useful. The reports could be matched in the London area, in parts of the Midlands, and in the West of England. From such reports and from many others it is possible to obtain a general picture of some of the main factors in a constantly shifting and developing situation. Two or three main points can be immediately distinguished. It is clear that there have been real and exceedingly fruitful advances in the degree of positive co-operation between managements and workers, and that in some cases it really can be said that the experience, ingenuity and indispensable authority of the men and women workers themselves are being brought to bear upon the problems of production. Equally important, there has been genuine progress in the breaking down of traditional suspicions, rivalries, and demarcation lines among the workers themselves. And finally there is going on a serious overhaul of other traditions and practices within industry which for years were regarded as sacrosanct and untouchable.

Among other basic questions with which the Production Committees are dealing with more or less success are the problem of the adjustment of piecework prices to get maximum production without depressing wages — a root problem throughout the whole engineering industry; the problem of abolishing unnecessarily fine limits without opening the door to inferior or dangerously inexact work; the problem of explaining, where possible, to the men and women on the job the reasons for delay and apparent waste of time —two factors very depressing to morale unless proper explanations not only can be given but are given.

So far as somewhat less general points are concerned, a few examples may illustrate the shape of what is happening. In one factory, the Production Committee has organised production teams, including workers from both day and night shifts, for the special purpose of eliminating the dissensions which normally arise between the two usual in the most advanced factories for all these shifts. As a result, the time taken for a particular job has been brought down from about 300 hours to 91 hours. In another, the Committee has established special training departments for newly engaged women workers to enable them to learn the job before going on to production. As a result of this institution, work in the machine shop of a single factory was speeded up to such an extent that it had completed two-thirds of the contract before other departments had completed one-tenth. In another factory, by organising shop meetings at which workers, alleged not to be pulling their weight, were subjected to constructive but candid and public criticism by their fellow workers, the production of an important bomber component was doubled. One illuminating point is made by the representatives of a factory where special attention has been paid to the desirability of rapidly clearing all finished products from the neighbourhood of the factory. Characteristically, it had been found that cynicism and slackness had been bred among workers when, after working all day on a Sunday to complete a particular product, they saw the parts made on that day still lying about—apparently unwanted—on the following Thursday or Friday. This, it may be noted, is exactly the sort of point which the management would in the nature of things be most likely to overlook altogether unless its attention were drawn to it from the employees' side of the Joint Production Committee. Such Committees should exist everywhere.

In some factories we see in process of evolution something like a new technique of wartime production. Nothing of the kind existed at the time of Dunkirk. Then it was enthusiasm and grinding work alone which raised production beyond the level of any reasonable expectation. And there is no doubt that it was precisely the absence of any such machinery as that of the Joint Production Committees which was in part responsible for the reaction that later occurred. For the Dunkirk period was followed by a period in which there flourished an attitude of cynicism and suspicion which is only now beginning to be overcome. It was the entry of Russia into the war which brought back again the "climate" of Dunkirk. It has been the task of the Production Committees to translate a change of attitude into terms of better organised production. The keenness with which the work of the Committees has been carried on is a demonstration of the real attitude of the working class towards the war. Despite the profound sense of frustration produced by our being in the main mere spectators of the decisive battle at Stalingrad, despite the exasperation so widely felt over the handling of the Indian problem, the huge majority of the working people of Britain retains the qualities which carried them through the darkest days of 1940. Enormous resources could still be tapped if the period of frustration and inaction were brought to an end.

FUEL-POWER AND THE SOVIET STATE

WITHOUT fuel for its engines and industries, the offensive power of a mechanised army is broken. If Hitler deprives the Soviet State of most of its fuel, he will have succeeded in his intention, for this year's campaign, of "pushing Bolshevism back to a remote frontier" and destroying the threat to his rear, even if his armies remain entrenched for the winter outside Leningrad and Moscow. The Soviet State's importance in the strategy of the United Nations is in direct ratio to the fuel available to drive its industrial and military machines. For Hitler, the Soviet capital is not Moscow but Baku.

The Russians realised this at the same time as they began to duplicate their Western heavy industry in the Urals and laid the plans by which Kuibyshev was to be an alternative administrative centre for the Union, if Moscow were in danger. In his report on the Five Year Plan in 1938, Molotov announced that "a new oil centre, a second Baku," was to be established between the Volga and the Urals. It was a measure of defensive economic warfare, a consequence, among others, of the large German purchases, in the pre-war years, of oil-boring equipment from the U.S.A. The Russians knew that it wasn't intended for peaceful use in Germany; it was intended for war—to supplement Rumanian boring and to replace what the Russians might destroy in the Causasus.

The Plan for the Second Baku was to produce by 1943 about 6 million tons, almost 20 per cent. of the average production of the Caucasus fields. The first commercial workings, in the carboniferous stratum extending from Krasnokamsk in the North to Chkalov in the South, and from Syzran in the West to Tuimas in the East, were begun at Syzran on the Volga and Tuimas. At Syzran, an oil refinery, built in 1938, was connected by pipe line to the cracking plant at Ufa, capital of Bashkiria. Syzran oil contains 25 to 30 per cent. of volatile fractions and is specially suitable for extracting aviation spirit. The aviation spirit of Maikop is lost; the Syzran oil, cracked in American plant by Tartar workers, is the Soviet's current reserve of aviation fuel, additional to the storage tanks in the Volga and Ural region, unofficially estimated at over 6,000,000 tons. The Ishimbayevo wells, to the South of Ufa, are the most productive of the "second Baku," yielding in 1938 more than six times the output of the Syzran fields.

In Kazakhstan, South-East of the Urals, lies the Uralo-Emba oil region, 400,000 square kilometres in area, stretching from Guryev on the north-east shores of the Caspian to Orsk, east of Chkalov. The Guryev-Orsk pipe-line carries a lower grade fuel, used chiefly for the Diesel engines of tractors and tanks.

Completing the cycle of the oil industry. Uralneft, the Ural oil trust, has its own oil-equipment plants at the Verkhni-Serginski works and the Metallist Works at Sverdlovsk.

As a supplement to the new oilfields, the oil shale deposits of the Volga are being used for extracting petrol and kerosene. The Kashpira heating and power station in the Kuibyshev province and the Saratov heating and power station are both run on shale fuel. This illustrates the Soviet talent for economy, as much as their present large-scale use of the peat deposits around Moscow.

If the Third Five-Year Plan has been fulfilled in the Volga-Ural-Kazakhstan oil region—and from the effort in other Soviet industries we may assume that war has hastened and not delayed that fulfilment—the region should produce this year over 5,000,000 tons of oil. As for coal, the other main fuel, the 81 million annual tons of the Donbas are lost. In 1940, about 25 million tons from the Kusnetsk Basin, 5 million tons from the Chelyabinsk fields, a further 5 million tons from Karaganda and 4 million tons from Eastern Siberia, were mined—nearly half the output of the Donbas. The coal of the Donbas is for the time being lost, with its industries, but the coal of the Eastern fields should be able to fuel the Soviet Union's remaining industries. It may not be adequate to warm its inhabitants.

I conclude, then, that if Hitler seizes the oil of the Southern Caucasus, the Soviet State will still be able to *defend* its entity, using the oil of the "second Baku," the Uralian fields and the coal of Western Siberia. But to be a factor of the United Nations' strategy in *attack*, the Soviet Union must receive help in order to retain the more than 20,000,000 annual tons of Baku oil.

MAURICE EDELMAN

THE CIVIL SERVICE

IN a democracy we credulous people who exercise the vote inevitably get the Government we deserve. But it is not always recognised that we get the Civil Service we deserve. It is sometimes hard to believe that we have deserved so badly of the heavenly disposer of all good.

This is a serious matter and we must be careful in our choice of words which reflect upon a silent service. Above all, we must not visit the sins of the politicians, their masters, upon the humble Civil Servants. The trouble is that the mind of the servant is always influenced by that of the master, even though the servant is permanent and the masters come and go. In a penetrating introduction to Mr. Mallalieu's book on the Civil Service* Professor Laski reveals the underlying cause of administrative feebleness to-day. "Whereas the Civil Service in the last war," he writes, "followed in the wake of eight years of the most active reforming Government this country has ever known, the Civil Service in this war followed on eight years of governmental inertia." And appeasement abroad, I would add, made for appeasement in domestic administration. To-day the Civil Service takes its cue from a Coalition Government of two parties which have pledged themselves not to upset the vested interests of the great capitalist and labour organisations. No Civil Service, even if it were mentally awake, could organise a total war under such political limitations.

There are critics of the Civil Servants who would charge them with sole responsibility for the amateurish planning and organisation of our war-time production. Not until a full year after the outbreak of war was any attempt made at a full survey of the country's production capacity. When committees were set up to decide how our production resources should be allocated, they were not given powers to make their decisions effective. For long, ministries competed with one another for the same products, for the same labour. Though planning is now better in the munition trades through the supervision of the new Ministry of Production, it is still pitifully inadequate in the civilian trades because the Board of Trade has never dared to control and plan total output. And nowhere will it be perfect or complete while industry remains in private ownership. But Coalition politicians pledged to preserve vested interests will never give the Civil Servants the full control over industry and trade which is essential for the organisation of total war. Let us not blame the administrators, then, too severely for inadequate planning.

Having made this due and handsome allowance for the political limitations imposed on the field of administrative action, I would agree generally with Mr. Mallalieu's contention that the Civil Service has been asked to undertake in this war a production and trading job which it is not fitted or trained or competent to do. We must, however, distinguish between the failures, which Mr. Mallalieu sometimes appears to confuse, arising from its functional disorders and those springing from its organic constitution. Most of the fantastic stories told about the blunders and absurdities of the Government Departments can be traced to the functional disorders of an overburdened administrative machine. Consider, for example, the forms and the red-tape. Both forms and routine are necessary in any organisation. But, as Mr. Mallalieu observes, many of the forms are unnecessary and most of them are quite incomprehensible for the reason that neither by their upbringing, their training or their daily work are the Civil Servants brought into direct contact with the people for whom the forms are intended. Unintelligible also are most of the orders issued to the civilian population under the Defence of the Realm Acts. To quote one illustration from *Passed to You, Please*: "The Press section would receive a note from some other section which read like this: 'Here is a notice for the Press: "In Defence Regulation 15, section C, paragraph 2 (b) delete 25 and substitute 15." Please get this into all papers to-morrow.'" Of course, no paper would print it, and the Civil Servants would get angry. But if the Press officer were to ask them for permission to re-write the unintelligible "officialese" into intelligible "journalese," as I did once, they would refuse. If the Press officer were to make the suggestion that as the unintelligible notice referred to, say, cutting down the manufacture of tooth-brushes from 20 per cent. to 15 per cent. of the pre-war output, the public should be so warned in simple English, and given some practical advice about cleaning teeth, this would have to be minuted through the various Principals or Assistant Secretaries, none of whom would be competent to express an expert opinion upon a matter of publicity, before it could be finally turned down. Mr. Mallalieu reports two cases of people who, driven mad by departmental forms, committed suicide. The numbers of those driven likewise to despair and destruction must be legion. Yet if we civilians were to spread one atom of the alarm and despondency caused by the Civil Servants we would be clapped in gaol.

Like the forms, routine has been carried to such excess that the progress of the war is often impeded. Civil Servants always tend "to run to paper." It is inherent in their nature. As one of them confessed to me, when a file is started and minute after minute is passed round, before long the file will control the Civil Servants instead of the Civil Servants controlling the file. As Mr. Mallalieu found out, if a decision is needed a Civil Servant will go to the file to see if a similar point has arisen. If so, the same decision will be given, even if the situation differs. "That is the Civil Service at war. It is snowed under with paper, bogged in routine."

But these defects are the functional disorders and could be put right by the exercise of common sense and circumspection on the part of the higher officials. There will always be a greater number of silly asses in public administration than in commercial life because in the latter the profit motive usually demands that no passengers are carried, that losses are cut quickly, and the asses are sacked. Now the inefficient stupid Civil Servant could be sacked, without the stimulus of the profit motive, if the Treasury, which is the head of the Service, were to alter its rules and regulations to keep pace with the times. But the Treasury is out of date.

The Treasury is entrusted not only with the control of the public expenditures but with the management of the Civil Service, its efficiency and its organisation. Its control, unhappily, has become purely a negative control. It is no longer interested in seeing that the public money is properly spent: it is only concerned to see that it is not spent. Instead of aiming at wise expenditure through an intelligible cost accounting, it tries to stop as much expenditure as it can, whether it is wise or foolish. Everyone who has been a temporary Civil Servant will have had experience of the dead hand of Treasury control. I have myself seen new departments organised to make the war machine run more smoothly and efficiently which have been hamstrung at the outset by inadequate Treasury finance. Even in the provision of vital munitions for the various theatres of war have Treasury limitations been imposed. Only in one direction has the Treasury been singularly successful—in the financing of the war and in the control of prices. For this we must thank the outside experts whom the Treasury called in, in particular, Lord Keynes and Sir Hubert Henderson.

There is another serious charge to make against the Treasury in regard to the technical organisation of the Civil Service. When a Minister needs technical advice, Mr. Mallalieu says, he goes for it to the administrative class in which the expert has no place. The administrator will ask for an expert memorandum, will then call for inexpert comments upon it from the official hierarchy, and the Minister will give a final decision upon it without discussing the question with the expert at all. Although modern war is an affair of complicated machines the technical experts seem to be conspicuous by their absence on the Army Council and in the consultations of the higher command. Is the Civil Service system of sitting on the technicians responsible perhaps for the Army not having its full complement of aerial artillery and "Tank-busters," or for the Navy not having the dive-bombers and torpedo-aircraft which can stop German battleships from steaming through the English Channel?

Professor Laski would call this absence of imagination, this lack of enterprise and audacity, this "unwillingness to press for experiments proportionate to the urgency," the symptom of an organic weakness in the Civil Service constitution. The predominant outlook of the administrators, he says, represents too narrow an area of public opinion. In the Foreign Office, we know, they represent the upper class. According to Mr. Mallalieu, in all the years from 1851 to 1929, 53 per cent. of the recruits to the Foreign and Diplomatic Service each year came from the aristocracy or gentry, 22 per cent. came from the professional classes, and only 4 per cent. from business families. Apparently a working-class boy has never got inside the Foreign Office except once—as the Foreign Secretary. These are the restricted upper-class minds which could not understand the vulgar upstart rulers in Germany, which could not even get into the heart of a middle-class Socialist democracy, much less a Communist republic.

The twenty practical suggestions for the reform of the Civil Service which Professor Laski puts forward in his balanced introduction to Mr. Mallalieu's book deserve to be studied carefully, particularly those for recruitment and training and for the separation of the financial and establishment functions of the Treasury. A Liberal Party committee has also proposals for reform which should be heard. Something must be done quickly not only to prevent a collapse in the administrative machine at war but to make the Civil Service fit to plan a new Britain after the war. It is not enough for our Civil Servants to say that they are incorruptible and hard working and "sound." We want to make them awake and enterprising and alert to social change, to bring them into contact with the people they govern, and to cut their red tape and stupefying routine.

NICHOLAS DAVENPORT

A LONDON DIARY

THE belated decision to remove the ban from the *Daily Worker* will enable Mr. Rust to bring out his first issue in time for the Trade Union Congress. This is a suitable date, for it was, I feel sure, the impending T.U.C. vote for lifting the ban—the card vote of delegates is roughly calculable before the Conference—that has decided the Government to allow the *Worker* and the *Week* to appear again. The notion that it has something to do with Mr. Churchill's visit to Moscow is, I think, common but mistaken. The battle was really won when the Labour Party Conference voted against the ban, as a result of an obviously ably conducted campaign throughout the working-class movement; it is extremely difficult for Labour and Trade Union Ministers to be members of a Government which refuses a desire so strongly expressed by the constituent bodies of the working-class movement. I thought the Home Office might have found a better excuse for so long delaying their decision; to suggest that they needed a year to know that the Communist Party were serious in their support of the war is really ridiculous. Communists will be the most ardent supporters of the war as long as Britain and Russia are allies.

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* *Passed to You, Please* by J. P. W. Mallalieu, with an introduction by Professor H. J. Laski (*Gollancz* 5/-).

* * *

People who know the Yorkshire coalfield tell me that the keenest of the miners are still very much concerned by the slow pace at which pit production committees are being developed, and believe that if this is not hastened the coal shortage will next winter be not only serious, but much worse than it need be. Miners working in three of the largest pits in the field have a long list of practical suggestions for increasing production which, they say, are at present disregarded alike by the managements and by a section of the miners themselves. In one pit, for example, there is an acute shortage of tubs. Men sometimes get only 8 of the 12 tubs required to enable them to earn the day wage rate. As this is no fault of theirs, they get the full rate anyway. But the result of that is that if additional tubs are delivered to the face late in any particular shift, the men do not bother to fill them. I give this as a pretty typical example of a situation where only an efficient pit production committee is likely to overcome the deficiencies of management on the one hand, and the traditional, peacetime attitude of the men to such a situation. In the same pit, because of a shortage of fitters below ground to carry out quick repairs, there are frequent prolonged breakdowns of the conveyor and the engine. During the breakdowns coal is simply piled into the "gob" and wasted. Here again, it is claimed, a production committee could tackle the question of the proper allocation of fitters—at least as adequately as the man-power shortage allows. An important point is that where committees already exist they are felt by the men to be much too small to enable them to have a full knowledge of all the vital facts in the case of seams worked by as many as 2,500 men. The committees are at present usually limited to five members, with only two representatives from the men's side. And naturally there are serious difficulties arising from the fact that there are some on the managerial side who see the committees solely as a new means of "driving" the men, without tackling organisation problems, just as there are some on the miners' side who see them only as a means of airing grievances against the management, without facing the weaknesses among the men themselves

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I was greatly impressed with a B.B.C. play by Graham Greene called "Gestapo in England." It was a warning to the insular Christian who has forgotten that the devil exists and may take human form. In our day he takes a Nazi form, and it is the well-intentioned person who may have known nice people in Germany, and who regards war as an interruption of a pleasant life—it is this kind of wishful thinker who is shown here as our undoing. This play gave a picture of what could happen in a famous Old School if the Nazis won the war. Only gradually is the meaning of Nazi victory made clear. One in every three could be shot in Wolverhampton without people knowing in another town, and this will happen wherever there is not "collaboration." The Nazis demand not only passivity from those they conquer, but actual co-operation in vileness—which was obvious to those with eyes during the Spanish war. All this was rubbed in by Graham Greene with a quiet and unemotional realism that made one's blood run cold. This is happening now just over the Channel to people like ourselves. To me the most striking remark was that of the Nazi thug, who is beating information out of a small schoolboy. Only romantics, he remarks, think courage will always conquer. You slap a boy in the face till he tells. If necessary, because he is full of a lot of heroic delusions, you whip him till he is unconscious. We admire this heroic resistance to torture and so on. But the *boy tells just the same.* It is just a matter of the scientific use of force. There is some breaking point; you go on with torture until you find it. Courage means more suffering; if the torturer has no conscience—and Poland and Czechoslovakia and occupied Russia suggests that this generation of Nazis has buried it pretty deep—then courage makes no substantial difference. The answer is that you must not let things get to the point when the Nazis are in a position to impose their will. It may be some time before any release can come to those who have fallen into slavery.

* * *

The annual Liberal Conference next month should be less dull than it has been for years. Acland, joint founder of the new Common Wealth, has, I gather, been persuaded not to resign from the Liberal Party. I doubt if he will play any active part at the Conference, but there he is, the symbol of a Forward March within the old Liberal machine. The resolutions put forward by people like Megan Lloyd George, Horabin, Clem Davies and others suggest several lively possibilities. The future House of Commons is bound, I think, to contain a number of "groups"; one of them will almost certainly be a Radical group which, I should think, would work with the Common Wealth. Splits are inevitable during this party truce, and they will be all to the good provided those who get into Parliament under their aegis are responsible people who can avoid the "atomisation of politics" by working together on real issues.

* * *

Max Beerbohm has never been widely popular, but among those who struggle with the craft of writing he is generally considered the most consummate artist in words now alive. In celebration of his seventieth birthday a group of his admirers met last Monday at the Players' Club, where he was presented with some cases of wine and entertained with old music-hall songs, prepared by the brilliant artists of "Late Joys." Mr. Alan Dent, the secretary of the Maximilian Society, arranged the occasion with great skill. The chairman, Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, spoke an appreciation (which is printed on another page); Sir Max responded with a speechlet that contained some biographical details. His great grandfather on the distaff side was a Yorkshire farmer, from whom he inherited the good sense that, he mentioned, was his chief virtue. His grandfather "on the spear side" was born in Memel long before the French Revolution; and from this close connection with the eighteenth century he gained his distaste for the machinery and uniformity of the twentieth century. The speech was marked by the artful lucidity and genial irony that distinguish his essays. The whole occasion was amiably informal and entirely without the pomposity that usually aggravates such celebrations.

* * *

One of the few pleasures war has brought to Londoners is the Zoo on Sunday afternoon. The Fellows still have their morning reserved; from 1 p.m. the gates are open to the public. Among several thousands I paid a visit last Sunday, and was lucky in encountering a burst of sunshine, a rarity in this greyest of summers. The Zoo, itself, in the circumstances, retains much of its charm. Traces here and there of bombing, the aquarium shut, no children's corner, gaps where poisonous snakes and elephants have been destroyed or removed; but otherwise less alteration than one might have feared. For a wartime Zoo Regent's Park is managing very well. There is a "utility" note in the demonstrations of rabbit-breeding, poultry and bee-keeping, and this is repeated—not unattractively to the eye—in cabbages that have taken the place of flowers. Monkey Hill has been given over to a meek white breed of goats, with a gay little cartoon on a nearby tree asking the visitor, "Why not keep a nanny?" *Lèse majesté* this, one feels, remembering the proud and furious visages of previous tenants. Most of the old favourites are still to be found, looking remarkably well: two wonderfully handsome polar bears, the giant panda somewhat the worse for publicity, lions, tigers, eagles, penguins, chimps, mandrills, peacocks, etc., in something like their original profusion. As usual, I found in out-of-the-way corners animals new to me: the Malabar giant squirrel resembles a lumbering kinkajou, with deep brown and purple markings and a head like that of Disney's tortoise; and there are several specimens of the wanderoo monkey, a bushy-whiskered fellow with a solemn air of Shakespearean theatricals.

* * *

Some of our amateur poster writers occasionally overreach themselves. The wag at one tube station stand announced the Premier's return by chalking up "HITLER'S CROWN OF THORNS ARRIVES HOME." What does this make Hitler?

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to "Czech Soldier."

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Every mile of the German advance towards the Caspian—to say nothing of possible German attempts to cross the mountains into Transcaucasia—brings the enemy within near reach of the British forces in the Middle East, and at the same time improves the opportunities for their co-operation with the Russian Armies.—*Times.*

I remember a friend and fellow-worker of the famous cricketer and missionary C. T. Studd once telling me that that great man used to say that he believed God has entrusted to Satan, before his fall from grace, control of the weather, and that it still was largely in his power.—Letter in *Spectator*.

Every evening at 7.45 people sitting or walking in Aske Gardens, Pitfield Street, Hoxton, are warned that it is closing time.

There would be nothing unusual in this but for the fact that although the gates remain there are no railings round the rest of the park.

When asked why he bothered to lock the gates every night the caretaker said: "I have never been told not to. It seems silly to me, but I shall have to go on doing it until I am told not to."—*Star.*

Lady would sell boudoir-grand Bluthner piano, 4-berthed caravan, show middle-weight hunter (ride or drive) and would buy secondhand riding macintosh and scent (Chanel No. 5 preferred).—Advt. in *Times.*

ORNITHOLOGICAL

"The flight of the Bullfinch is quick and undulated, and capable of being protracted on occasion." Morris, British Birds.

From Orkney to Land's End
  The bird-watchers talk
Of the African meeting
  Of Bullfinch and Auk.

Bird news from the desert
  Sent word far and wide
That the Auk was a species
  To the Phœnix allied.

Bird-watchers were baffled
  By a bird-bulletin
That the Bullfinch in Egypt
  Had lately been seen.

Now to studies of bird-lore
  New facts must be linked—
Bullfinch is a migrant,
  The Auk is extinct.

SAGITTARIUS

PROSPECT FOR RELIGION

II.

INTO what channels, I am asked, are the accumulating waters of spiritual frustration likely to flow? Not, there seems to be general agreement, into those of the organised churches. Figures recently compiled by Mass Observation show that while 5 per cent. of the population go oftener to Church than they did before the war, there is an increase of 21 per cent. in the number of those who never go at all. The President of the Methodist Conference has recently drawn attention to "the precipitous decline in church membership," while according to a report by Hugh Redwood recently published in the *News Chronicle*, "those with experience of Religion and Life weeks and similar campaigns throughout the country know that on the devotional side they have made no impact worth mentioning on the non-church-going masses."

It may then, I think, be taken as agreed that the congregations of the churches, already at a low ebb, are still dwindling. Nor have the religious broadcasts usurped in the popular favour the place once occupied by the churches. Few, I imagine, listen to them, except those in whose lives organised religion already plays a substantial part, and they are so dull that the chance of their quickening the religious impulse in those in whom it is at present dormant, may for all practical purposes be left out of account.

The group of clergymen with whom I had the benefit of discussing the situation, described the various devices which they and others had tried to bring people, and especially young people, into the churches. On the whole they must, they agreed, be written off as failures. Whatever methods people are adopting to strengthen and comfort themselves under the troubles and difficulties that press increasingly upon them, they are not having recourse to the organised churches. As a clergyman put it to me, "For twenty years we have been trying the public with every kind of bowling known to cricket, legbreaks, offbreaks, the fast one that goes straight through, even with long hops and full pitches to leg. But what we have never noticed is that there is nobody batting." But though there is nobody batting on the ecclesiastical county ground, there is plenty of cricket on the village pitches. While the lads whom the National Youth Movement has brought into the Boys' Clubs, cannot be persuaded to go to church or Sunday school, to quote Mr. Redwood again:—"On one of the most brilliantly fine Saturday evenings of this summer I saw the largest available hall in one of London's dormitory districts packed to the bearable limit with youth of both sexes, eager to hear their own kind, again under first-class leadership, discussing the part of religion in the world that will be their world."

I deduce that there is an underlying spiritual frustration, a well of unexpended seriousness accumulating beneath the crust of contemporary indifference. Some of it dribbles over into the hundred and one substitute religions of our time. Nature abhors a vacuum in the spiritual world no less than in the physical, and as religion proper recedes from the forefront of men's consciousness, Theosophy and Christian Science and Spiritualism and Rosicrucianism, and now astrology, come forward to usurp the place which it has ceded. But these, to quote a recent phrase of Mr. Tom Harrisson, are no more than aspirins for the sick headache of humanity—they can neither cure it nor remove its cause. Herein lies danger. Men may be incommoded no less by the frustration of the need for religious than of that for sexual experience, and unless some outlet can be found along the orthodox channels, the frustrated worshippers may flock, in this country as they have done on the continent, into the temple of the State and make sacrifice upon the altar of the dictator, the god of the State. The 20th Century is not the first period in history when men deprived of God have dressed up a man as a God-substitute, and established some all too human figure completely, with raincoat, moustache and lock of hair, or a tummy and a row of medals, in His place. "Hitler is lonely; so is God; Hitler is like God"—so runs one of the articles of the new German Creed. There are many roots of Fascism, and most of them, one would like to think, are absent in this country; but one, the religious root, or more precisely, the root in the frustration of the religious sense, is undoubtedly present and, unless it can be removed, somebody may seize the opportunity to raise from it the same unholy growth.

To remove it is the professional job of the churches. I have spoken of some of the disabilities under which they labour. How can they be overcome? Let it be said at once that nothing less than a revolutionary reorganisation will suffice. Religious weeks, prayer weeks, returns to religion, honest stock-takings, realistic fact-facings, increasing concern with social problems—all these, the accustomed stock-in-trade of attempted church come-backs, fall far below the measure both of the need and of the opportunity. The churches are at the parting of the ways. Either they will fade altogether from the national life, and become wholly, what many are in large part already, empty shells, or they may come once again to assume importance in the lives of men. If they are to do so, they must, I suggest, develop on one or other of two lines.

There is, first, the line of development indicated by the Malvern Conference. Carried to its logical conclusion, this entails a vigorous move to the Left. Let the churches come out strongly for the abolition of the profit motive in industry, thereby putting themselves at the head of contemporary advanced movements in politics and economics; let them cut the cable of the State connection, thereby disembarrassing themselves of the necessity of justifying the policies of Governments, and apologising for war; let them put their own house in order by effecting an equalitarian distribution of their own financial resources; let priests be poor and go out among the people as men of the people; let them make the cause of the underdog their own; let them, in a word, align themselves with the revolutionary tendencies stirring in the matrix of the times, and they may once again hope to interpret religion to the times. Here are some commandments for clergymen aspiring to fill this role:—Don't concern yourselves with matters of ritual and ceremony which bore the common man; don't waste your time and energy in internal disputes and inter-denominational controversies on matters of doctrine which disgust him; (don't indeed insist on matters of doctrine one way or another, but lay stress, not so much on a set of propositions which believers must accept as articles of faith, as upon a code of conduct which all decent men must observe); don't speak in your churches in unnatural voices which depress or intimidate him; don't teach dogmas about the geography of the universe and the history of man, which science has shown to be untrue, and which therefore arouse his contempt. If anybody can stage a church come-back on these lines, it is the present Archbishop of Canterbury.

But there is, as it seems to me, another possibility. For thirty years or more the churches have been growing broader, looser, and less exclusive. The tendency has been to throw down barriers, to blur the hard and fast lines of dogma, above all to soft-pedal the supernatural implications, the other-worldly affirmations of Christianity. Denominationalism, with its doctrinal differences has declined, partly because the importance of doctrine has diminished. Doctrinally Christianity has become little more than the highest common factor of what most decent men believe; practically, it has done little more than codify the standards by which most decent men seek to regulate their conduct. "And look," it may be said, "at the result. The raising up of a pagan generation in a pagan world. As a consequence of trying to make religion easy to believe and cheap to practice, you have made it worth nobody's while either to believe or practice. If religion is ever again to matter, it must reverse the engines and become hard, dogmatic and exacting. Above all, since its authority derives from another world, it must not be ashamed of the other-worldly connection. On the contrary, it must tell 'modern thought' to go to the devil, and stress the other-worldly connection."

The alternative line of development is, then, that of a Christianity which is doctrinally tight and practically exacting. It will refuse to concern itself, except incidentally, with the affairs of this world, justifying its refusal on the grounds that this world is not the real world and this life not man's true life. This world is too bad to be real, this life too bad to be true. We do wrong, then, to expect very much of either of them; the most and the best we can do here is to prepare ourselves by discipline, faith and prayer for a better life in an eternal world hereafter. A church advancing along this path—or should I say, returning to it?—would not hesitate to insist on supernatural dogmas as articles of faith and to impose abstentions, and even penances, as disciplines of life. Indifferent to political creeds and economic remedies, it would not directly seek to permeate, or even to influence the State. The good that it did—and it would do much—would be from the margin and not from the centre; its priests would relieve suffering as and where they found it, and would devote their time to helping the poor and the sick, the prisoners and the oppressed, instead of to interviewing Cabinet Ministers and pestering Government departments. As a consolation to man's sorrows in this world they would persistently hold out the hope of another. The impolite name for all this is "escapism"; the polite, the revelation of the true faith and the return to the true mission of Christianity.

Whether it be "escapism" or true Christianity, this strain in the Christian religion has always come to the fore in times of the breaking of civilisations. It was preached and practised by the Fathers during and after the dissolution of the Roman Empire; by Father Joseph, and, more creditably, by Pascal, during the miseries of the Thirty Years War. Are there symptoms of its recrudescence to-day? I think that there are. On the doctrinal side there is the influence of Karl Barth. There is the new revival of mysticism, sponsored by Messrs. Huxley and Heard. Despairing of our civilisation which they regard as beyond redemption, the new mystics would withdraw from it, in order to develop man's other-worldly connection by the deliberate cultivation of the psychological techniques of mysticism. At the same time, following the precedent of the monasteries, their withdrawn communities would seek to keep alive something of the old learning and the old culture, thus serving as a bridge between the civilisation that is dying and the civilisation that is yet to be born. If things come to the worst, such a bridge must, indeed, be built, and it is only right that some of us should be preparing ourselves for the task.

This alternative development would be a continuation of the same tradition that Conrad Noel kept so gallantly alive, the tradition of High Anglicanism, which with its censers and incense and gorgeous robes, its ritual and processions, its lovely churches, its elaborate singing, has sought to make of religion a thing beautiful yet apart—apart, that is to say, from this world and from the political and economic movements that seek to better man's lot in this world. By example and precept its priests living among the poor and obscure lives of poverty and obscurity, would teach men that a better life was possible than any that this world has to offer.

Is it only a guess that such a man as Father Groser is a harbinger of this, that I have called the alternative development? I know, of course, that both Conrad Noel and Father Groser believed and believe in the possibilities of political betterment. In the world in which we have lived up to the present such belief was possible, even plausible. But if, as I say, the worst comes to the worst, then it is in the monkish element and the other worldly strain in High Anglicanism that men will increasingly seek consolation and refuge.

C. E. M. JOAD

WASPS

"There's a wasps' nest in the hedge at the top of your garden," said the man who lives on the other side of the hedge. "I would have put a light to it, only I was afraid of setting the hedge on fire." I saw that he wanted me to take the thing in hand, so I made inquiries as to the best way of destroying a wasps' nest. The general notion seemed to be that there was nothing better than cyanide of potassium. I tried to get some of it at a chemist's, but the girl behind the counter, after a sharp look at me, said there was none in stock. A friend whom I told of my needs said that he could get some for me in the City. When he met me the next evening, however, he had no cyanide of potassium, but said to me reproachfully: "Do you know you nearly got me arrested to-day? That stuff you asked me to get for you is a deadly poison. One chemist said to me: 'There's enough poison to kill ten people in the amount you could put on a pre-war threepenny bit.' I told him, if it was a poison, I would sign for it, as I wanted it only to kill wasps, but he said that, even if I signed for it, he wouldn't dream of letting me have any. I went into half-a-dozen other chemists and they all said the same thing. I could see that none of them believed the wasp story. The last chemist obviously suspected me of planning a murder, and I was surprised he didn't telephone for the police." "It's that spotty tie you wear," I told him; "it would make anybody suspicious." "Anyhow," he said, "what are you going to do about it?"

Luckily, in the bar of the "White Horse" in which we met, the village sage was sitting with a pint of beer in a glass mug beside him. Hearing of the peril in which my few apples stood owing to the suspicious nature of chemists, he said: "I got some stuff will kill your wasps. Take no more 'n two minutes. I'll be round to-morrow morning half-past twelve." And so on the Sabbath morning I waited for him at the gate—in some trepidation, for I felt that it would be ignoble not to stand by him in his work, and yet, from all I had heard about wasps, it seemed likely that, when their nest was attacked, hundreds of them would fly out and do their best to sting the pair of us to death. Having no tennis racquet, I took a stout walking-stick, however, and felt not entirely unprotected.

The old man—he had fought in the Boer War and was bearded like Socrates—arrived at the gate carrying the pilgrim's staff with which he walks the roads. He showed no sign of nervousness. "All I want," he said, "is a little water—not much more 'n a pint." I filled a watering-can and accompanied him to the far side of the hedge to look for the nest. Soon we discovered one wasp after another making for a spot near the root of a hazel.

With a smile of satisfaction the sage put a hand into his pocket and drew out a blue bottle labelled "poison." "We'll soon stop 'em," he said, opening the bottle and pouring some crystalline powdery stuff into his palm. With complete fearlessness he put his hand over the opening of the nest and emptied it of the powder. Then he took another small palmful and emptied this, too. This done, he asked me for the can and flooded the nest with water. "That's settled 'em," he said: "If you watch now you'll see hundreds going in, but you won't see one coming out. They'll go in because they like the smell and think it's sugar, and then they fall down unconscious. That's why, if you stood here all day, you would see hundreds of wasps going in but never a wasp coming out. Look," he said, and as I watched a continuous succession of wasps returning to their doom and not a single wasp emerging again, I began to feel almost sorry for them. "They'll all be dead in less than no time," said the sage with what I thought a hard-hearted chuckle.

As I returned to the house without the wasps having even attempted to sting me, I began to wonder why people have ever been afraid of wasps. Think of all those breakfast tables in the country that used to be thrown into consternation by the appearance through the open window of a single pretty little insect asking nothing more than to be allowed a tiny share of the marmalade. On such an occasion I have seen knives brandished at table as at a tavern brawl of Sicilian banditti. There was usually one cool-headed person at the table who would say: "Don't infuriate it. If you keep perfectly still it won't sting you; but, if you wave things at it, you will only make it furious." The person who said this was usually sitting at the opposite end of the table to the wasp. Since then I think I have discovered the reason for his advice. He probably knew, as I know now, that an infuriated wasp never stings the person who has made him furious, but, if he stings anybody at all, flies a small distance off and stings somebody else. Hence I think that, for the purpose of self-preservation, there is a good deal to be said for infuriating a wasp. Hit out at it boldly, and it will seek more timid prey in some other part of the room.

I do not much believe in the possibility of the infuriation of wasps, however. The wasp, so far as my experience goes, is either a coward or amenable to reason, and if you wave a table-napkin or a newspaper at it gently—almost languidly—it will at once make for the nearest open door or window. It has none of the persistence of the housefly or the mosquito. It may return half-a-dozen times, but not more if you have a newspaper or a napkin handy. If only some large moths were as easy to get rid of, how much pleasanter it would be to read in bed!

The fear of wasps, indeed, seems to me to be almost as ridiculous as the fear of geese or mice. The sting of a wasp, I admit, is painful—rather more painful than having a tooth out without an anaesthetic. But, if it stings you, it is seldom intentionally and nearly always by accident. The only time I was ever stung was when I was walking in the garden one morning in my dressing-gown. I happened to put my hand into my pocket, and a wasp—made drunk, no doubt, by my plums and looking for a place to sleep—happened to be there and, almost without knowing what it was doing, it stung me. The pain, I can assure those who have never been stung by a wasp, was excruciating. I have been bitten by many insects, but most of their bites are mere irritants. The wasp's, however, is a sharp stab that pierces and poisons at the same instant. Even then, however, the wasp might not have stung me if I had observed the counsel of my aunt, who once said: "A wasp can't sting you while you're holding your breath." Unfortunately I was not holding my breath when I put my hand into my dressing-gown pocket.

As one cannot go about in August holding one's breath all the time, perhaps the best means of preventing any one from being stung is to destroy all the wasps. Oddly enough, however, no one who destroys a wasps' nest ever admits that he does so through fear of being stung. He always pretends that his object is to save the fruit. Some years ago, with this excuse, the committee of a Surrey flower show offered 2s. to anyone who captured two hundred queen wasps, and, when the show was held, no fewer than 10,451 dead queens were on exhibition. The "champion wasp-slayer," it was announced, had 3,110 queens to his credit. On such a large scale was the massacre of wasps, indeed, that the committee of the flower show was compelled to reduce the size of the reward as the only alternative to bankruptcy.

Whether England would be a happier country if all the wasps were exterminated is a question that I am too ignorant to answer. No sooner do most of us regard some creature as a pest—the little owl, for example, the stoat or the hawk—than some heretic comes forward with evidence that it is not only harmless in its activities, but a benefactor to the human race. The wasp, like other unpopular survivors from Noah's Ark, has its defenders every season. "The wasp," declares one enthusiast, "is one of the farmer's best, if not very best, insect friends. It is a persistent enemy of many noxious insects, particularly of the daddy-longlegs, whose grub, the leather-jacket, spends three diligent years in devouring the roots of grasses to the serious damage of lawns and pastures." Another writer says that "the wasp's activities are nine-tenths or more beneficent." "Justice to Wasps" ran a heading in the *Times* some years ago, and I have also read an article entitled "The Friendly Wasp," by an entomologist. The cumulative evidence in favour of the wasp is so great, indeed, that my conscience begins to prick me over my activities with the watering-can on Sunday morning.

Queens have died young and fair, but was I justified on Sunday in taking part in the slaughter? No wonder, perhaps, that the chemists look on any one who asks them for cyanide of potassium as a rather unpleasant type of murderer. Y.Y.

THE CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH

[This was delivered by the chairman of the Maximilian Society at the celebration of Sir Max Beerbohm's seventieth birthday.]

The duty of a chairman is to say what is expected, no more, no less. If he can say it in an unexpected way, so much the better, but his function—and it seldom recommends him to impatient spirits—is to repeat clearly what the audience already knows. Hence, his classic opening, the sense of which he at once proceeds to ignore. "Gentlemen, I'm sure there is no need for me to introduce to you our honoured guest."

Much as you love, Max, alltime-honoured formalities and customs—especially when they have something ridiculous about them, I can't begin like that. I shall do better if I start by introducing the Maximilian Society to you, a proceeding which also has a claim to being in some degree unnecessary; for you have read the list of its members. That list contains the names of some of your oldest friends, and those of much younger men who you may or may not know to be your affectionate admirers. Well, the long and short of it is that we *all* felt a strong desire to make some sort of gesture of overt homage to you, apart from our personal feelings for you. And you will interpret exactly what we are feeling at this moment if you recall the pleasure it gave *you* to join in a similarly collective tribute to Henry James; and I can imagine you saying, with just a touch of his aloofness: "I understand what you mean and I thank you." But I can also imagine you—at least when you first received this invitation—wondering why we had not followed the usual procedure—that of sending to the gratified recipient an address, inscribed upon paper looking as much like vellum as possible, and expressing homage, as nearly as possible, in the language of monumental inscriptions.

It is a much *purer* pleasure to read in solitude than hear in public praise of one's own work. Of course, we knew that. We have been selfish. We couldn't help thinking that it would be simply delightful to have you among us this afternoon, though insisting on that involved your facing jets of point-blank admiration with that becoming mixture of incredulity and gratitude, which it is always a strain to keep up.

But by the greatest piece of luck we have been able to make amends—thanks to the Players, the finished interpreters to-day of those Victorian music-hall songs and turns of which you are so fond, and of which you have written "that they wake sleeping memories in some breasts, more melancholy for me, fainter than the scent of soever long-kept lavender."

I don't expect, however, that even to-day, even in our wounded *shabby* London to-day, they will awake a too painful nostalgia.

I said that list of the Maximilians contains the names of those who are your contemporaries and those who belong to a much younger generation. We all, at whatever date we were born, continue all our lives to be the children of the period in which we came intellectually of age—I'm speaking of imaginatively receptive people. You, Max, and your oldest friends here, writers and painters, are children of the Nineties. One of the things for which your contemporaries are so grateful to you is that your skilled example as a writer has kept them aware that in that respect they were not unblessed. It was a period in which it was easier than it became later to perceive that Art had some connection with beauty; that craftsmanship is as important as originality; and that a humane detachment is possibly as valuable in a writer as a burning ethical or economic conviction.

You have been perfectly loyal to our period: you have shown us that in literature a shallow river should always be forded as though it *might* become deep, that in prose as well as in poetry even a hair can throw a shadow, and as a servant of the Comic Muse, you, like Sterne, have known how to invest with a little loveliness—a joke.

Do you remember, Max, writing in 1895, in Chicago of all places, whither it was then rumoured you had gone to re-establish Monarchy in the United States, an essay called *Diminuendo?* Filled with ironic resignation and a pretence at *fin-de-siècle* weariness? You must have been in your twenty-third year. It ended thus:

> Already I feel myself to be a trifle out-moded. I belong to the Beardsley period. Younger men with months of activity before them, with fresher schemes and notions, with newer enthusiasm, have pressed forward since then.
>
> *Cedo junioribus*. Indeed, I stand aside without regret. For to be out-moded is to be a classic, if one has written well. I have acceded to the hierarchy of good scribes and rather like my niche.

I hope you still do.

In this age of emphatic pontificators; of theorisers on art whose pronouncements remind one of watching a man trying to eat macaroni with a teaspoon; of poets, too many of whom, like inexpert fiddlers, are always "grumbling against their strings"—yes, you are still "out-moded." That's why we enjoy you so much; that's why, long after us, others will also.

It is part of my business to keep an eye on the behaviour of Father Time in literary matters. How often, when he was house-changing, has he cleared out for good and all the great beds on which thousands had found rest, the great coffers and cupboards where they had stored what they thought were lasting treasures, keeping, however, some small objects just because they were charming and complete? How many, except duty-ridden or curiosity-ridden professors, now read some books that once stirred the emotional and intellectual life of Europe? And yet *The Sentimental Journey* and *Manon Lescaut* are still on Father Time's mantelpiece.

Of the Nineties, Max, you were "the Wise Youth." The years have taught you very little. You were then almost as sensible as you are to-day. Then, though every leader of taste admired your small, elegantly unspontaneous essays, there was already in you something slightly disconcerting to the most luxuriantly confident of the aesthetes. I wonder if a remark which Oscar made about you ever reached your ears: "The gods bestowed on Max the gift of eternal old age." If it did, at the time, in your twenties, it might quite well have made you a little uneasy—for a little while. Yet it implied certain most valuable immunities.

I suppose the prime, and perhaps the only, distinctive virtue of old age is a natural tendency to tolerance. When that is combined with the fastidiousness of youth—well, then we get a "Max."

The problem of every artist—in the wide sense in which the Greeks used the word "poet"—every "maker," is to strike a balance between devotion to his art and his love, *for their own sakes*, of the things that feed his imagination. Where that balance lies depends, of course, on the nature of his talents. But if he loves life itself too much, the chances are that he will never assimilate it properly; and if he lives for art alone, as the aesthetes of the Nineties urged him to do, it is probable that after a while he will have next to nothing to write about. Ah, Max, how happily you have solved your own problem! Words, words, words. What are words—at least mine, compared with what I am commissioned to offer you by the Maximilians: One dozen Beaujolais, one dozen Chambolle-Musigny 1923 (Burgundy), one dozen Beychevelle 1933 (Claret), one dozen Lignorelles 1934 (Chablis), six bottles Niersteiner Domthal 1935 (Hock), six of pale golden Sherry and three of the finest Madeira of great age, twenty years in bottle. *In vino veritas:* believe in our gratitude and affection.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

AN EEL

WALKING by an eel-shop I thought an eel would be nice for supper. So from the tank in the window I chose one of the biggest. The man sliced off the head and chopped the rest into two-inch sections which were left hanging by a thread. With this wrapped under my arm, I went home and said to Lizzie, "I've got a surprise for you—leave everything to me."

First I had to divide the eel, and this proved more difficult than I had imagined. The skin of the eel is tough. The pieces resist too, one by one, and though I had expected this, it rather shook me. But at last it was done, all the pieces were thrown into a basin of water, and I had the frying-pan ready. Then, as I was about to reach down into the water, I noticed the eel's head. Its eye caught mine, its mouth—oh, horror!—its mouth slowly opened. I waited. The mouth shut. Then, after a pause, it opened and shut again. That was all.

Perspiration was running down my spine. I tried to nerve myself by reading Prunier on eels. But the good lady merely says, "Chop your eel," or divide or cut it, and passes on to an elaborate ritual. "Surround with little heart-shaped croutons and trussed crayfish . . ." (*Madame Prunier's Fish Cookery Book*, p. 87.) No, no. There's a limit. I had to put on gloves as it was.

I couldn't eat a morsel as a result. Even the eyes in the potatoes seemed to speak of suffering. I understand now why some people have turned vegetarian and recoil from certain dishes. Most of the eel went to our guests, who tucked in as usual.

At 2 a.m. I was wakened by gunfire, which we haven't heard since I don't know when. At first I assumed it was indigestion—the eel I *didn't* eat—but then the sirens went. I remember someone telling me once that when an octopus is put into the pot it makes a noise rather like a siren, trailing off at the end.

At least the eel is silent.

FANFARLO

THE MOVIES

Newsreels

"The Palm Beach Story," at the Plaza

"The First of the Few," at the Leicester Square

I mentioned the newsreels last week because of a number of interesting and well-photographed items. This week they steal the thunder from any programme with pictures of the Malta convoy and the raid on Dieppe. The first (Paramount version) is one of the most spectacular and moving pieces of newsreel I have seen: the attack on the ships slowly pushing along the Mediterranean towards Malta was terrific, and the film (taken with sound-track) is terrific too. None of our own losses are shown and few of the enemy's, though occasionally an attacking plane skims the sea and disappears; but the barrage! Guns spit and recoil, empty cases pile up round pom-poms, rivers of tracer shells pour into the sky till it's like a flowerbed with shell-bursts. These ten minutes bring home the news of a fortnight ago. Even more topical, though perhaps not quite so startling, is the newsreel of the raid on Dieppe (Movietone). The Spitfires set off at dawn (admirably shot); the barges creep up to the French coast behind a smoke screen; a Canadian pilot, who has baled out, is pulled up from the sea; we are shown something of the air fighting from sea-level, of the bombing of Dieppe from the air; then glimpses of the return home, stories of the wounded. It is an inspiring and vivid record; unfortunately, though, either for reasons of secrecy or because the action was too "hot," there are no scenes of the actual landing and fighting. Also, though Canadians and Americans are brought in front of the camera, there is no reference to the Fighting French who took part.

How many films has Preston Sturges produced? Five, is it? The latest surprises and delights by its taste as though nothing of the kind had been known before. The range is less than in *Sullivan's Travels*—no macabre this time, or singing darkies; but farce and tenderness—a difficult blend—are combined in *The Palm Beach Story* without a fault. It is funny, wildly funny, not only in visual disasters and off-hand jokes, but with a soaring fantasy that is the opposite of surrealism. The sequences of the "Ale and Quail Club" travelling by train with their guns and dogs—in the end they shoot every glass in the bar and view-halloo down the corridors—are delicious. Preston Sturges has a drastic hand in comedy, his hero (Joel McCrea) has to tumble downstairs and his heroine (Claudette Colbert) trips in pyjamas a foot too long, but the touch is warm. What is the story? No more, on paper, than the familiar drifting apart in marriage and joining together again. I forget how often I have met this theme in two years of film-reviewing, but I should say at a guess 999 times. *The Palm Beach Story* is the thousandth time one doesn't forget. The charm of this film reaches from Miss Colbert, at her most irresistible, to the president of the Ale and Quail Club, who can only hiccup hysterically.

The First of the Few has been made into something of an English occasion; and memorable it is, as a film, and patriotic in a true sense. Why don't we at all times—in peace as well as war—make more of our modern heroes and legends? Lawrence of Arabia seems one of the obvious choices for a film director of talent. The producers of *The First of the Few* have celebrated an almost unknown name in R. J. Mitchell the designer of the Spitfire. He sprawls on a sea-cliff and watches the streamlining of the gulls; works away from the current box-and-string ideals in flying; builds strange all-of-a-piece craft for Schneider races; and kills himself working to put his Spitfires in the air before it is too late. Leslie Howard gives one of his admirable performances in this dedicated life. Who could better convey the seclusion, amiability, dreaminess and courage required of the part? The only trouble is that in the earlier parts of the film, with a succession of new planes and Schneider races, the tension sags and Mr. Howard gives us once more a perfect portrayal of Leslie Howard. I don't mean this as too serious a criticism, because acting so accomplished brings its own delight, but it isn't till the tragic end approaches that we feel for R. J. Mitchell something of what Paul Muni once made us feel for Zola. This is a sincere, exciting, well-constructed and well-acted English film. Walton's music deserves special recommendation. His fugal movement for the assembling of parts of the Spitfire adds immensely to the most moving sequence in the film.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

TO MAX BEERBOHM, NOW

BEHOLD those large blue eyes,
their cool calm look,
and how they print the words
as can no book.

Behold those tapered hands,
the swift way they move,
as artist's hands, outlining
with wit and love.

Hear that voice's pitch:
its slow fine talent
enacts a thousand scenes
gay, sad and gallant.

Here's talk that fills the room
with fun and laughter,
and the memory with delight
long days after.

SYLVIA SPRIGGE

Correspondence

COLOURED TROOPS IN BRITAIN

SIR,—Critic's remarks last week on the presence f coloured American troops in this country, and the ethods of the military authorities in dealing with the problem" are singularly opportune. His analysis f the situation is acute, but there is one point on which e writer would like to express some slight disagreeent.

It is doubtful if any sociologist who has studied the uestion of colour prejudice in Britain would share his egret that so many coloured soldiers have been sent. n fact, their presence here provides almost a unique pportunity for the breaking down of certain strongly ngrained attitudes in this respect which we ourselves ossess. There is little doubt that these attitudes re based largely on certain "stereotypes," or convenional ideas of the coloured person, for taking the opulation of these islands as a whole, it is doubtful f as many as 5 per cent. of us have ever had any ersonal contact with a coloured man or woman.

It is just possible that the main difficulties of the roblem Critic describes could have been avoided by more careful consideration on the part of the military uthorities concerned. Was it absolutely essential, or example, that both white and coloured Americans hould be posted and billeted in the *same* small towns? s the following few observations and inquiries show, he possibilities of friction and misunderstanding re aggravated greatly by such a situation.

It appears in a number of such cases that orders r requests have been issued by the American military uthority to the townspeople to the effect that white nd coloured troops should not be permitted in the ame civilian canteens. In some cases the townspeople ave refused to comply with this. Partly as a result f this, the latter have become extremely annoyed t what is regarded as discrimination against the oloured soldiers. As a further result, scuffles between hite and coloured Americans have occurred in public laces when, for example, a number of the latter have ntered, or have tried to enter, dance halls or bars here the white Americans were already disporting hemselves. Apparently, in one case the white mericans remonstrated with a landlady for serving oloured customers. The reply of the woman, as tated, is significant: "Their money is as good as ours, and we like their company."

Many of the townspeople, in fact, assert strongly hat they "prefer" the coloured troops to the white. The effect of the "segregation" on "morale" is also nteresting in some cases. A typical remark is "it seems silly to talk about democracy when we have white and black troops who will not talk or mix with one another." The coloured soldiers are noted as being "too reserved," "careful," "too self-controlled and disciplined," and the construction put on these "observations" is that the coloured have been "cowed" by past inter-racial experiences in the States. In short, there is an obvious and fairly definite tendency in many quarters towards championing the "cause" of the "Blackies" (note the diminutive) against the white Americans. The reaction of many of the latter is as might be expected. They appear to be at first very puzzled at events. They cannot understand the English attitude, more particularly the attitude of English women, and are especially puzzled at the popularity of their coloured compatriots.

It is certainly to be hoped, as Critic suggests, that the American authorities and our own will pay very serious attention to the matter in all its ramifications. The rough and ready fashion of telling our own troops male and female, that they are to adopt certain attitudes towards the coloured soldiers, is no solution. It is likely to enhance considerable antagonisms, already incipient as a result of differences in pay, towards the white Americans, and will test to the breaking point the democratic faith of the more ideologically minded.

K. L. LITTLE

CZECHS AND SUDETENS

SIR,—Referring to the comment in your issue of August 15th upon the notes exchanged by Mr. Eden and Mr. Jan Masaryk I would like to emphasise these points:

(1) Consistent Sudeten German anti-Fascists cannot but rejoice at what you call the demise of Munich. We have always opposed the Munich agreement. We have never put up with the violent separation of the Sudeten areas from the Czechoslovak Republic by German imperialism. Consequently we never ceased to regard these areas as a part and ourselves as citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic and closely collaborate with our Czech and Slovak countrymen. Consistent Sudeten German anti-Fascists cannot at the same time oppose Munich and build up their politics on the separation of the Sudeten districts from Czechoslovakia by German imperialist annexation, as do those who condemn the diplomatic act of August 5th as being inconsistent with the Atlantic Charter and the interests of the Sudeten German people.

(2) The abolition of the Munich agreement is in full accord with the principles of the Atlantic Charter, which promised to all peoples the government of their choice. Munich was the most flagrant violation of these principles. Even a very large section of the Sudeten Germans would have refused to be incorporated into the Third Reich.

It is true, in the Eden-Masaryk notes no mention was made of the future position of the Sudeten Germans. But this is a purely internal problem of the Czechoslovak Republic. Indeed, it is a matter of great significance. Much depends on its just solution. But I am sure it will be solved in the spirit of the Atlantic Charter by the peoples of Czechoslovakia themselves, without any interference by other powers after the defeat of Hitlerism.

(3) The majority of the democratic Germans from Czechoslovakia living in this country, have on the occasion of the abolition of Munich readily renewed the expression of their allegiance towards the Czechoslovak Republic. Hundreds of them are soldiers in the Czechoslovak army, prepared to fight Hitler on the Continent. This is the time to strengthen the collaboration against Hitler by enlarging the representation of the Sudeten German anti-Fascists in the State Council and by settling the urgent task of Sudeten German anti-Fascist propaganda within the framework of Czechoslovak broadcasting from London.

G. BEUER
(Former Member of the Czechoslovak Parliament.)

NORWAY'S RESISTANCE

SIR,—Will you permit me to add one or two points to your admirable exposure of the many inaccurate and tendencious statements in Mr. Pritt's *Revolt in Europe*. You have already pointed out one factual mistake regarding the position held by Viggo Hansteen. An even grosser error has been made by Mr. Pritt, in the case of Rolf Vickstrom, who, far from being "chairman" of the Norwegian T.U.C., was, in fact, a young shop steward in a railway carriage works near Oslo.

These and other inaccuracies in the pamphlet can perhaps be explained by the high speed at which Mr. Pritt doubtless has to undertake work of this character. But what is not only inexplicable, but also inexcusable, is the insulting innuendo contained in the remark (not quoted by Mr. M A. Shaw in his defence of Mr. Pritt) that Hansteen and Vickstrom, "true to their social democratic traditions," did their best to bring the strikes to an end. The insult is a dual one, directed first against Social Democracy in general, which in Norway has effectively led the resistance of the workers from the first moment of the German invasion and, secondly, against Hansteen and Vickstrom in particular; that is, against men who, not only in Norway itself but throughout the whole world of Labour, have won a leading place in the roll

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of working-class martyrs. The insult rather misses fire in the case of Hansteen, for, as you correctly point out, his traditions were communistic rather than social democratic. The tradition which he followed on September 10th, 1941, was, however, neither specifically communist nor specifically social democratic, but rather the well-established trades union traditions of endeavouring to minimise the consequences of a premature direct action which, especially under the conditions of armed Nazi terror, could only result in useless bloodshed and the crippling of future resistance.

Central House, KONRAD NORDAHL
Upper Woburn Place, W.C.1.

VESTED INTERESTS

SIR,—The Acland or " Common Wealth at Gower Street " conception of my own Common Wealth plan is so erroneous that I beg of you space to correct it. Sir Richard fancies that I would " leave all the front-line industries in private hands—subject to a lease from the State." My post-war proposal is that the title to *all* capital should be vested in the State, that the State itself should manage and run all the big " investment " industries, which govern the level of employment and the rate of economic activity throughout the whole country, and that the would-be *entrepreneurs* should turn their enterprise to the consumption trades (except those, like milk distribution, which will be nationalised), provided they obtain a licence or lease from the State, pay a royalty to the State, and submit to the State's trade regulations and dividend restrictions. To describe this proposal as leaving front-line industries in private hands or as exposing the workers to private exploitation is nonsense. Sir Richard must re-read *Vested Interests or Common Pool?*

What really upsets Sir Richard is that I allow the instinct of economic self-betterment to remain the motive power in the restricted field of controlled and licensed private trade. He ignores the revolution I propose in the law of private inheritance and claims that everyone should be motivated by the desire of service instead of by the instinct of self-betterment. Now the idea of service is really a spiritual quality. It comes from a knowledge of the unity of God and Life and of the brotherhood of man. By proper education we shall, I hope, all grow towards this ideal, but you cannot force a nation into being spiritual by legislation. You can only legislate against the bad material conditions which undermine national morality. Sir Richard is impressed, no doubt, by the increasing talk of service to-day. This is a natural phenomenon in war and springs from patriotism, or funk or hatred of the enemy. But in peace the instinct of economic self-betterment will reassert itself and, if it is wisely controlled and directed by the State, it will provide the basis for a spiritual and cultural advance, seeing that better homes, less poverty, less unemployment, better wages and conditions of work generally make for better morals.

I am terribly afraid that Sir Richard really believes that you can legislate a material man into being a spiritual one. The last man who thought he could dragoon England into Puritanism was Oliver Cromwell, and he turned out to be a dictator repugnant to the good sense of the English. Let Sir Richard beware lest his zeal for puritanism should swallow up his love of democracy.

The Athenæum Club. NICHOLAS DAVENPORT

PLANNING THE LAND FOR USE

SIR,—Are you not a little too unkind to the Scott Report? The Committee were told to consider the " conditions which should govern " building, etc., in country areas, and the " factors affecting " the location of industry; and this is what they did. In respect of building, for example, they have postulated the establishment of a central planning authority, insisted on the necessity of " a big building programme " for rural housing immediately after the war, supported by statutory panels of paid architects and others to ensure good design and suitability for purpose, and recommended a reduction in the proportion of " tied " cottages, the control of agricultural building under planning schemes, and the universal provision of electricity and water and a wide extension of gas supply—services which can be regarded as essential elements in good housing. These are the " conditions " and the Committee have stated them; it was not within their terms of reference to say how these conditions are to be fulfilled.

Doubtless it is over the " how " that the main struggle will be waged; but that will be the Government's concern, and if vested interests stand in the way, it will be for us to elect a Government which will sweep them aside. HUMPHREY BAKER

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SIR,—Does Sir Stephen Gaselee think that sending his daughter to a London Grammar School exemplified the principle of One School for All Classes? The 400,000 grammar school pupils in this country enjoy the following advantages over the five million elementary school pupils: smaller classes, better buildings and equipment, more air space, more money spent on school dinners, more playing fields and more generous staffing (in numbers, qualifications and salary scales). It will be a gigantic educational advance when elementary schools enjoy the present secondary school standards.

Further, during twenty years' teaching in town a country I have known a few cases of children of th professional classes attending elementary schools but never have I known other children or parents resent their presence. G. W. ORTON SMITH

" A T.V.A. IN THE DANUBE VALLEY"

SIR,—At the conclusion of an otherwise blamele article Mr. Ritchie Calder declares that the Tenness Valley Development might well serve as a model f a Danube Valley Scheme, since the seven Stat implicated were all sovereign.

I suppose that technically speaking the sev States were and are sovereign States so far as th T.V.A. touched State rights as laid down by th American constitution. But it is downright nonsens to compare the " domestic affairs " sovereignty o States set within the ambience of a Federal government with the sovereignty of a pre-war-post-Atlantic Charter National State such as any in the Balkans.

Mr. Calder knows full well that a citizen in an of the seven States affected by the T.V.A. is a American first and a member of a State within th American federal union a long way after. Th makes it possible for an astonishing degree of " free" co-operation to take place between the constitue States of the Union on matters upon which th Federal Government possesses no constitutiona authority; and this because the Federal Governme by liquidating the strategic importance of Stat frontiers creates a political climate conducive t inter-State co-operation. Take away the feder government, and give every State full authority o every plane of government and the result, God ble us, would be vastly different. There would certainl be no T.V.A. HOWARD FOX

SECOND FRONT

SIR,—Do I understand by your monosyllabic reply to Lord Keynes that you believe political prejudice still to be a serious obstacle to a Second Front?

W.

[No. Our point was that if the Second Front is thought of purely as a military operation and decisions based entirely on the number of tanks, aeroplanes, men and shipping available, then there are always likely to be good reasons against any action. If, however, political warfare is not regarded as an " extra " but as an integral part of operations, and if the factor of partisan resistance is fully taken into account, then much that has looked too difficult becomes possible. To understand this type of warfare which, quite frankly, means organising a revolution, is outside both the training and the imaginative scope of most experts.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

The case of Poe. To return to a subject that leads in many directions: What was it implanted the legend of Poe the Great, a figure still bowed to by poets and critics, while the recitation pieces and thrillers are gobbled up by schoolboys? A halo of mystery and misunderstanding surrounds this author who has become a favourite with the multitude. But when was he ever unpopular? What or who made him misunderstood? So far as misunderstanding goes, Poe did his best; and for each access of popularity, each prizewinning story or poem that brought the invitation of recitals, he added a little to the legend. *The Raven* took three years to write and achieved a stunning success; whereupon Poe set out to explain its composition in an essay that removed poetry into the region of the calculus. The hoax may or may not have been conscious. We can see plainly enough to-day the reasons why Poe invented such legends; why, for example, with tottering senses he clung to a doctrine of pure intellect; why, despite all his talk of Science and Poetry, there was no place in his aesthetic for Truth (he could only lie about himself); why he had to prove himself in literature a superman, or mechanical marvel of the kind seen at fairs; why his world of terror—as remote and self-contained as the young Brontës' Gondal—lacks any normal contacts and especially the contact of sex: Poe's psychological necessities will be obvious to everyone acquainted with his biography. (I recommend *Edgar Allan Poe, A Study in Genius*, by Joseph Wood Crutch, published by Knopf in 1926, as a lively and fair account.) For Poe the death of a beautiful woman was "the most beautiful thing in the world"; he married a child of twelve, and after her death she was succeeded by shadowy visions and maternal comforts. This explains *why* Poe lived and wrote as he did, but not how he has gained an immense literary reputation. His own genius and mystification would not have kept the ball rolling for long: no longer, say, than did Gauguin's legend-making about himself. To-day—but for the intervention of Baudelaire—Poe would probably rank as a poet below Longfellow, his stories would be on the shelf with Wilkie Collins, he would be discovered from time to time along with Fuseli, Christopher Smart and other gifted eccentrics.

* * *

But for Baudelaire! It was a strange piece of good fortune, both for Poe and for literature, that Baudelaire in quest of himself should have discovered Poe. His need for just such an *alter ego* can be felt in the instantaneous recognition—"I saw with terror and delight not only the subjects I had dreamed of but *sentences* that I had thought of, and that he had written twenty years before"—and also in the fact that Baudelaire spent fifteen years polishing and re-polishing his version of the *Tales*. During this period he himself reached maturity as a poet, and though *Les Fleurs du Mal* does not owe a great deal directly to Poe, Poe's example confirmed and strengthened him as perhaps no other writing could have done. Certainly the other props—Gautier, say, and De Quincey—were less essential. While engaged in this work of translation he used to frequent a tavern in the Rue de Rivoli, where he drank whisky, read *Punch*, disputed meanings with the grooms of the Faubourg St. Honoré. To begin with, Poe was an aristocrat tragically beating his wings in a land of apes; later, when Baudelaire got to know more of the real story, debts, drink, opium, mysterious love-affairs, and the presence of the *pédadogue-vampire* Griswold formed a not unsympathetic atmosphere of persecution. Poe became part of his life, an extension of his talent, a religion. He prayed to Poe, preached him. No wonder the legend thrived! No wonder that at first his friends believed this miraculous American to be Baudelaire's own creation! And so in a sense he was. E.-A. Poë became in French literature such a luminary as he himself might have desired.

* * *

Let us look first at a few critical opinions in France from 1850 onwards. The flood of adulation is almost embarrassing. Often it seems as though Poe's admirers had gone out of their way to extol his weakest points. Thus Gautier:

> Les âmes tendres furent particulièrement touchées par ces figures de femmes, si vaporeuses, si transparentes, si romanesquement pâles et d'une beauté presque spectrale, que le poète nomme Morella, Ligeia, Lady Rowena Trevanion, de Tremaine, Eleonor. . . .

Baudelaire himself:

> Poe a fait peu de poésies; il a quelquefois exprimé le regret de ne pouvoir se livrer, non pas plus souvent mais exclusivement, à ce genre de travail qu'il considérait comme le plus noble. Mais sa poésie est toujours d'un puissant effet. Ce n'est pas l'effusion ardente de Byron, ce n'est pas la mélancholie molle, harmonieuse, distinguée de Tennyson, pour lequel il avait d'ailleurs, soit dit en passant, une admiration quasi fraternelle. C'est quelque chose de profond et de miroitant comme le rêve, de mystérieux et de parfait comme le cristal.

This might have been written, with justice, of Coleridge's *Christabel*. Baudelaire also discovered in Poe's verses what no English reader can have noticed, "une volupté mystérieuse, il est vrai, mais sensuelle." Jules Lemaître speaks of Poe as one of the archetypes of human genius in the same breath with Shakespeare and Plato. The Goncourts saw in the *Tales* the novel of the future. Others less illustrious went even further; *Eureka*—that rhapsodical ragbag of Poe's decline—was set by someone or other above Goethe's *Faust*. And so on through Verlaine, Mallarmé, Maeterlinck, down to Valéry and the present. Dissentients have been comparatively few, and though Sainte-Beuve could never be lured into writing about Poe, one must set against this his reluctance or inability to see the true stature of Baudelaire. It is a strange history, seeming to bear out the theory (Tolstoy's view of Shakespeare) that collective hallucination is one of the elements that go to make a genius.

* * *

But several things should be remembered. Few of those who had read Poe in English could appreciate subtleties or deficiencies in the original (this is true even of Baudelaire), and no doubt the great majority knew only a Poe transformed, inevitably for the better, by Baudelaire and by Mallarmé. I have been dipping here and there in the former's *Histoires Extraordinaires*, and Baudelaire's improvements are apparent in almost every line. The sentence-ending, for example, which I quoted on this page last week: ". . . but for all this immortality, the grave was still a home, and the corrosive hours co-mates," is translated by Baudelaire: ". . . pour tout ce néant et toute cette immortalité, le tombeau était encore un habitacle—les heures corrosives, une société." For the final phrase Baudelaire had written first "les heures corrosives, *des camarades*", but the awkwardness, though more faithful to the text, had offended him.

The transformation that Poe's verse has undergone in the hands of Mallarmé is even more remarkable. I recommend *Poèmes d'Edgar Poe* to everyone who wishes, at this time of day, to recapture the magic impact of Poe, and to understand his link with Symbolism. Mallarmé, using free verse or cadenced prose, has made a new book, from which the insipidities and sad tinkle of the original have vanished. Here is the beginning of *The Raven*:

> Une fois, par un minuit lugubre, tandis que je m'appésantissais, faible et fatigué, sur maint curieux et bizarre volume de savoir oublié—tandis que je dodelinais la tête, somnolant presque: soudain se fit un heurt, comme de quelqu'un frappant doucement, frappant à la porte de ma chambre—cela seul et rien de plus.

And here is the first verse of another poem equally, and rather dreadfully, familiar—*The Bells*:

> Entendez les traîneaux à cloches — cloches d'argent! Quelle monde d'amusement annonce leur mélodie! Comme elle tinte, tinte, tinte, dans le glacial air de nuit! tandis que les astres qui étincellent sur tout le ciel semblent cligner, avec crystalline délice, de l'oeil: allant, elle, d'accord (*d'accord, d'accord*) en une sorte de rhythme runique, avec la "tintinabulisation" qui surgit si musicalement des cloches (des cloches, cloches, cloches, cloches, cloches, cloches): du cliquetis et du tintement des cloches.

Even Poe's most haunted pieces, "Ulalume" and "The Haunted Palace," gain immeasurably in music and wonder from this audacious treatment. Again, how far is it Poe, how far Mallarmé? The schoolmaster of the Lycée Fontanes, when the name Poe was mentioned, would inscribe on his blackboard these lines from *El Dorado*, as though they were holy writ:

> Gaily bedight,
> A gallant knight,
> In sunshine and shadow,
> Had journeyed long
> Singing a song,
> In search of Eldorado.

And he would go on to say, "A genius the most truly divine the world has ever seen." Incredible!

* * *

But of the *effects* of Poe there can be no doubt at all. Among poets greater than himself his influence touched Rimbaud: *Le Bateau Ivre* and the theory of vowel colours are Poesque. The twilight of "Ulalume" leads straight to Maeterlinck's and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The *Tales* inspired Huysmans at one end of the scale, Villiers de L'Isle-Adam at the other, with Jules Verne and the early detectives thrown in. It is a miraculous progeny. I have tried to trace any comparable influences on English literature, but, despite critics, the dragon's teeth here have shown a poor crop. Gosse proclaims that all but a few poets have been influenced by Edgar Poe: then where are they? Yeats refers to "unparalleled gifts of melodious invention," but his own gifts far excelled those of the man he was praising. The Yellow Book? Poe would be in the air, certainly. There is Stevenson, too. But the only English writer of importance who might, perhaps, have learnt from Poe is De Quincey. I remember being struck the other day when reading *William Wilson*, the most autobiographical of Poe's narratives, by a resemblance to passages in the *Opium-Eater* and the *Autobiographical Sketches*; in the use of the first person, the mingling of incident with hallucination, the musical-dramatic employment of prose, Poe (it appeared to me) sketches a style that reaches its summit in De Quincey. (In the same way *The Imp of the Perverse* seems to give us—and *does* give us—bold but awkward hints of effects in Baudelaire.) But here are the dates. *Opium-Eater*, 1822: *William Wilson*, 1837. *Murder as One of the Fine Arts*, 1827: *Tales of the Arabesque and Grotesque*, 1839. Either the resemblance is accidental and traceable to common sources, or Poe was tamely echoing De Quincey. For to a ferocity of invention—and it was this seized Baudelaire—he joined the tamest of literary manners. I think this is true of all the poems except *To Helen*. His water-colour poems, the "pure poetry" of which so much has been made, reflects only deeper and purer tints in others. Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, *Christabel* and *The Ancient Mariner*, with a few tricks added, will be found on the lower floors of a mansion in which Poe is furiously engaged in the attic. He was a great populariser.

G. W. STONIER.

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RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

My Musical Life. By N. RIMSKY-KORSAKOV. Translated from the fifth revised Russian edition by JUDAH A. JOFFE. *Alfred A. Knoff.* Distributed in Great Britain by *Secker and Warburg.* 36s.

Whether or not, as has been claimed, all painters write well, it must be admitted that few musicians do. Among the rare exceptions—Berlioz, Weber, Busoni, Ethel Smyth : as letter-writers, Mendelssohn and Mozart—the most enthusiastic would hesitate to include Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Between the luxuriant fancy of his creative imagination and the prosaic literalism of his memoirs there lies an enormous and puzzling gulf. Honest to the point of pathos, he felt keenly those deficiencies which he was unable to correct, and at the end of his book summed them up with excessive harshness, adding, however, that "in compensation it contains *nothing but the truth*, and this will lend it interest." The italics are his own, and abundantly justified : in spite of its dryness and un-Russian personal reserve, *My Musical Life* remains, by virtue of its accuracy and reliability, the indispensable source-book of one of the strangest episodes in the history of art, the musical renaissance of nineteenth-century Russia.

The familiar and characteristic feature of this renaissance is that its protagonists were all amateurs : Moussorgsky a guardsman, Borodin a Professor of Chemistry, Rimsky-Korsakov in the Navy, Cui in the Engineers. Nor were these occupations of a secondary order : Cui was an authority on fortification, lectured at the staff college and became a Lt.-General, while Borodin remained to the day of his death a busy and distinguished figure at the Academy of Medicine. Even Balakirev, their leader, who filled no non-musical post until late in his life, lacked systematic training in music and was by temperament perhaps the most resolutely amateur of them all. For they not only lacked technique ; they despised it. Such an attitude on the part of the immensely talented "five" was easy to understand. Despite lip service paid to Glinka, professional music in mid-nineteenth-century Russia offered a depressing spectacle. The leading musicians were the Russian equivalent of Sir Henry Bishop, Sir Julian Benedict and Cipriani Potter ; the staple fare consisted of jog-trot presentations of the minor European operatic classics—Auber, Meyerbeer, Donizetti ; while over all lay the paralysing influence of the Court and the Censorship, occasionally patronising, invariably obstructive. It was not a world in which youthful brilliance was likely to acquire a respect for professional efficiency.

Unluckily, contempt for technique was carried well past the stage of salutary revolt to a pitch where it seriously hampered creative work and left the world poorer to the extent of many unfinished masterpieces. Distaste for academicism hardened into indiscriminate contempt for the masters ; counterpoint in particular was a red rag, no distinction being drawn between the vital and the scholastic sorts. Borozdin, a friend of Balakirev, used to illustrate his disdain for polyphony by dancing Bach's A minor fugue in a style which I commend to the attention of our symphonic choreographers : "he would first lead off with one foot ; with the entrance of the second voice he would brandish one hand, with the third voice the other foot, etc. ; and he would wind up like a mill towards the end." Mastery of technique is, of course, no brake, but a spur to the imagination ; lacking it, the great Russians grew hesitant before the large formal problems of symphony and opera, began to pour their ideas into smaller channels or to spread them thinly over vast unrealised projects, and turned with distaste from the weary labours of instrumentation. Added to all this was the usual disorder of private life : Balakirev haunted fortune-tellers and religious cranks, Moussorgsky drank, Borodin lived in a sort of corridor infested with student protégés, poor relations and importunate tom-cats. The wonder is not that *Khovanshchina* and *Prince Igor* are incomplete, but that we possess them in any shape at all.

Alone of the five, Rimsky-Korsakov achieved both domestic peace and, by a most surprising road, complete musical craftsmanship. At the age of 27 he was offered the Chair of Practical Composition and Instrumentation at the St. Petersburg Conservatory. It was a situation for Gogol. "At the time I could not decently harmonise a chorale ; not only had I not written a single counterpoint in my life, but I had hardly any notion of the structure of a fugue." He was then known as the composer of the symphonic poems, *Antar* and *Sadko*, and had almost completed the opera, *Pskovityanka*—works written, one might say, by the light of nature ; already, however, he felt the creative stream, unnourished by technical skill, beginning to run dry. On a courageous impulse, which astonished and shocked him in later years, he accepted the professorship and, contriving to keep just ahead of his pupils, plunged into study with a devotion which impressed and touched Tchaikovsky. By sheer hard work he made himself into a master of musical art : his *Textbook of Instrumentation* is still authoritative. On his own productions the result of his labours was entirely happy. The newly mastered technique was at first a cerebral affair, unassimilated into the living musical tissue : to this period belong frigid *a capella* choruses and string quartets stuffed full of fugatos. Soon, however, he began to pour out a stream of songs and operas, based as before on folk legends, but adding to the brilliant colour and shot-silk texture a marvellous new plasticity of form and melodic style. In this country Rimsky-Korsakov is, I think, rather undervalued, being known almost entirely by those vivid but shallow concert-pieces which appear to have been orchestrated in techni-colour. His fifteen operas, the major item in his *oeuvre*, filled with fascinating experiments in recitative and form, amount to something more than a glowing picture-book of Russian legend and history. He is, for example, in the strictest sense of the word, an incomparable melodist ; he invented an ecstatic, sinuous, half-oriental type of melody akin to *arioso* : an enchanting style of which Marfa's arias in *The Tsar's Bride* provide instances more characteristic than the overworked Hindoo song from *Sadko* or the Queen of Shemakhan's aria, exquisite though that is, from *Coq d'Or*.

To the remainder of the group he appeared as something of an apostate. Relations with Balakirev became strained ; Moussorgsky finally "trans-brandied" himself out of this life ; the charming Borodin, more and more deeply entangled in domestic and professional worries, could no longer be persuaded to devote a single complete day to music. When the two latter died, they left behind them a mass of sketches, plans and incomplete operas the order of whose scenes had never been fixed. With the utmost conscientiousness Rimsky-Korsakov and his pupil, Glazunov, set to work to clear up the mess ; writing out from memory, for example, the overture to *Prince Igor* which Borodin had often played at parties but never committed to paper. At times the pedant in Rimsky rose to the surface ; he largely failed to comprehend the intensely dramatic and realistic genius of Moussorgsky, perhaps the most original in all music. He worked confidently over the score of *Boris Godinov* very much as the editor of *The Tailor and Cutter* longs to go round an art gallery : restoring missing buttons, removing superfluous

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creases from coats and inserting them where they ought to be, down the fronts of the trousers. The result was so brilliantly "effective" that it went round the world and quite effaced the original, which is only now beginning to receive the attention it deserves in the opera house. A great wrong has been done to Moussorgsky; but not even the most ardent admirer of the *ur-Boris* questions the honesty and good faith which led Rimsky to undertake so disastrously thorough a revision. Indeed, every chapter of his life reveals a sort of artistic and human integrity that seems now to have been blasted from the face of the earth by the barrage of publicity, nationalism and propaganda. By the end of the story the reader comes to love him as deeply as did his students.

A word about the new edition. It is based on the latest and definitive Russian edition, which restores many passages previously omitted and includes admirable notes by the composer's son, together with a chronicle of the last two years (1906–1908) not covered by the main narrative. Well indexed and carefully printed, it is a scholarly piece of work, marred only by an expensive and tasteless format.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

FAR ARABIA

Arabia and The Isles. By HAROLD INGRAMS. *John Murray.* 18*s*.

In the High Yemen. By HUGH SCOTT. *John Murray.* 18*s*.

These books are geographically complementary, for they cover Aden and its Protectorate, the Hadhramaut and the Yemen—together, the south-east angle of the great Arabian oblong. This region of ancient human habitation and civilisation is little known to the West. European ships passing through the Red Sea may put in at Aden, but they have no trade with that towering hinterland; even the small coasters which call at Mukalla or Hodeida only see the ports. Tales of travel from such a region are bound to be exciting, for men who go there, whatever their official reason, are primarily impelled by "love of knowing what should not be known," and their readers can share vicariously in discovery.

Mr. Ingrams has chosen to write his work as an autobiography, which is, as it curiously happens, the most modest form it could have assumed; for it follows the course of a colonial official's career, Zanzibar, Mauritius, Aden, to its consummation in the Hadhramaut, as if it were all the most ordinary affair. Also, though he is haunted by the biblical cosmogony of the land, he eschews the biblical language which seems natural to writers translating mentally from Arabic. Here is no stylisation to remind one of *Arabia Deserta* or the *Seven Pillars*, only a transcription of journals, anxiously accurate, which even tends now and again to read a little flat. The interest and the importance of the book lie therefore wholly in its matter, and they are both great.

Mr. Ingrams seems surprised that his long dream, of reaching the Hadhramaut, should have come true. But this event is hardly astounding. Aden is far from being every man's meat, and an official who steadily wants to go there is likely to arrive at last. Moreover, Mr. Ingrams is no mere dreamer: the reader soon discerns that the explorer's longing is joined with the administrator's energy and the creative sense of the statesman; a formidable combination, especially when they are dominated by a faith. This man, in a job which involved mediation between the warring tribes of the western Protectorate of Aden, learned that he had a talent for peacemaking, if the necessary power were set behind the peace. When he and his wife spent their leave exploring the wadis of the Hadhramaut they became as convinced of the necessity for ending tribal feuds there as ever Livingstone was of abolishing the slave trade in Africa. The state of the country was such that nobody had the power to reconcile blood-feuds generations old; though many had the wish:

> The old men met us, and taking me in silence to the top of their tallest dar, showed me the country. "There lie our enemies," they said, pointing at the western wall of the wadi. "We can shoot at them from here. All this country round was one, green with date-palms, but they have destroyed them by pouring kerosene on them and we, too, have destroyed theirs."

The Ingrams had faith, and they moved the mountain of Whitehall oblivion of a part of the world called a British protectorate, but in which the sole concern of authority was that it should not pass to some other empire. Mr. Ingrams was appointed the first British official in the country, and he made peace with his two hands. How he did it must be the reader's pleasure to learn: I shall not spoil by summary an enthralling story, and one with an obvious analogy between that small Arabian anarchy and the world anarchy which englobes it. But some marginal comments are allowable. First comes the usefulness of a woman (provided she is intelligent and courteous) in Moslem lands. After all, men are debarred from meeting half the population, and in tribal society the family is more important than elsewhere. Mrs. Ingrams is of the metal of Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark. She seconded her husband's work with equal courage and enterprise: she rode alone, to carry the message of reconciliation, up valleys where each village was at war with the next, and within each, half the families at feud with the rest.

> One gentleman discussed the matter from a second-storey window. He apologised for not coming down, but explained he was busy carrying on a war single-handed against all his neighbours.

Again, Mr. Ingrams recounts in detail the use of air-bombardment against banditry upon the roads. Many people, like me, feel sickened at the thought of bombing villages, and I still believe this method liable to appalling abuse. But I am now convinced of its efficacy and even of its leniency in the Aden Protectorate; and all who hold views on the subject must, in justice, read this history. The end of the first bombardment in Hadhramaut was a love-feast with the Bin Yemani, the raiders.

> "You did well," they said "to bomb us. And we thank you. If we had given in before, people would have said we were cowards. We want peace, too, now we know you'll keep it. Come and stay with us."

Besides the main theme, the account of the country and of its people is deeply interesting. Mediaeval cities built in the valleys scoring the volcanic plateau; men who travel to Zanzibar, Singapore, Java to trade—the great public benefactor of the Qu'aiti Sultanate, Seiyib Bubakr al Kaf, is a Singapore millionaire—an elaborately articulated class system in which slaves rank above the descendants of conquered aborigines. There are very good photographs, and a map of the sort where you cannot find all the places mentioned in the text, and names are printed every way up, which makes me want to put back my head and howl like a dog.

Dr. Scott wrote *In the High Yemen* as a non-scientific description of an insect-hunting journey. He includes a certain but not a boring amount of entomology and botany, but much more about the country generally. He notices the really interesting things; how the people live, what they grow and eat, how they build their houses. The mediaeval arts of tracery and stained glass are still practised; and the Imam has ideas of

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reforming the mediaeval hygiene. The author recounts uncomfortable interviews with that sacred monarch and friendly intercourse with lesser Yemenites, with the same scientist's notation of detail, plain but sharply observed, which renders the whole book pleasant reading. But the point of it is, of course, that the Yemen is a secret country nowadays, almost closed to foreign travellers. The Imam is suspicious, as every ruler of a small state is bound to be, of imperialist European designs; although it says little for his judgment that he permitted the residence of politico-medical missions from the country which really threatened him, Italy, and treated these harmless beetle-hunters as probable spies. Dr. Scott and his companion were only allowed to enter after long delay, were accompanied everywhere by armed guards, and had strict bounds set upon their excursions, barring out strategic mountain-tops and the new motor route from San'a to Hodeida. None the less, they saw plenty to afford material for a picture of a country ranging from a tropical coast to temperate uplands; San'a, the capital, lies at near 8,000 feet. For this is *Arabia Felix*, and though the climate is far drier and the land has desiccated since the days of Rome, it still supports about half the population of the peninsula. Dr. Scott was there in spring, and describes the close cultivation of the upland fields. He speculates on the possibility of reconstructing the ancient irrigation works destroyed by volcanic eruption and the encroaching desert. The photographs show grimly fine mountain scenery and beautiful cities, mosques and houses. They are superb, and by themselves would make the book worth buying.

FREDA WHITE

LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP

A Sheaf of Studies. By E. K. CHAMBERS. *Oxford Press.* 10s.

Chariot of Wrath. By G. WILSON KNIGHT. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

No scholar has done more for the study of English literature, and especially for our knowledge of the history of the stage, than Sir Edmund Chambers, and the amount of research he has put into his monumental works on these subjects is so great that one might well imagine he had had no time for anything else. But one had not gone far in this "Sheaf" without seeing that one is mistaken. It might well have been thought impossible to add anything to the Life of Coleridge; but Sir Edmund, in a paper on "Some Dates in the Annus Mirabilis" of 1798, has achieved the miraculous, and he gives us, from collections ranging over fifty years, papers, essays, talks, and lectures, all suggestive and most attractively written, on Matthew Arnold—trying, among other things, to locate the famous elm-tree of "Thyrsis"—on Meredith, in an article which may serve to correct the present opinion of the novels; and on Alice Meynell. Besides these are some on more general literary themes, among which, if choose I must, I should select as specially delightful "Ghosts in the Bodleian" and "The Dedicated Life." First of the ghosts is Duke Humphrey himself, lamenting that of the two hundred and eighty-one books he presented only two are left; next is Sir Thomas Bodley; and then comes a host of other phantoms down to Johnson, Lamb, Hazlitt, and President Routh of Magdalen, who saw Johnson in his youth, and then, whether through a passion for oranges, as promoters of longevity, or, as some Fellows of his college believed, from sheer malignity, lived on into his hundredth year. We are also reminded how sometimes the Bodleian got rid of books; how the Catholics burnt Tyndale's New Testament and the Puritans the scholastics; how, so late as 1683, the political writings of Hobbes and Milton were committed to the flames, and how Anthony Wood, still later, shared the same fate. Nay, Sir Edmund tells us that somebody even burnt *Robert Elsmere* or *Jude the Obscure*—he cannot remember which.

"The Dedicated Life," starting with some account of the Greek Epigrams, which "give imperishable form to the wise maxims of a garnered experience," passes gradually on to consider what we may call in brief "purpose." As the member of a religious order gives himself to it, vows to obey its rules, and prepares himself for it, so—though not always—we find poets dedicating themselves, devoting themselves to their art as to a religious vocation, "towards which time leads them and the will of heaven." This notion, of poetry as an end of life, Sir Edmund traces in the main to the example of Virgil, but I am not sure that if we knew more we should not find that it stirred still more keenly in the heart of the author of "The Nature of Things." Studying Epicurus, Lucretius had experienced a kind of conversion, and wished others to share his experience. Be this as it may, Sir Edmund is certainly right in holding that it was from Virgil that the humanists of the sixteenth century learnt their lesson, and that through them it passed to Spenser and Milton. Owning Spenser as his human master, Milton trusted in "devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, Who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge." From Milton we pass to Wordsworth, who tells us of the memorable morn, on which he made no vows, but vows were made for him, and a bond unknown to him was given, that he should be, else sinning greatly, a dedicated spirit.

These few fragments will be enough to show that in these hundred and fifty pages there is much that the reader will not willingly let die.

In *Chariot of Wrath*, Mr. Knight takes upon himself the difficult task of interpreting the message of Milton to democracy at war. Difficult indeed it is, for Milton was far from an ordinary democrat. To him the people were a herd confused, a miscellaneous rabble, who extol things vulgar and, well-weighed, scarce worth the praise. Nevertheless, it fell to this high aristocrat to defend the *people* of England at one of the most important crises of our history; and it might seem impossible to reduce the chaos of Milton's opinions to order. So far as success is attainable, I think that Mr. Knight by a careful study of the relevant works, has attained it; and Milton, like Burke, though he contradicts himself, is always great. Whether Church-Puritan, Presbyterian, Royalist, Republican, or Oliverian, he is a prophet of Isaiah's calibre; a hater of bondage with ease and a lover of strenuous liberty. There can be no doubt on which side he would have stood to-day; and the thoughtful reader of Mr. Knight's book will find much to encourage him in the vicissitudes of this doubtful struggle.

E. E. KELLETT

U.S.S.R.

Russia and Her Western Neighbours. By GEORGE W. KEETON and DR RUDOLF SCHLESINGER. *Cape.* 8s. 6d.

Professor Keeton and Dr. Schlesinger have produced a book which is of considerable topical interest. It is a study of the past, present, and future relations of the U.S.S.R. and neighbouring countries. The six chapters of the first part deal with Finland, the three small Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia, and Esthonia, White Russia and the Ukraine, and Poland; the five chapters of Part II deal with the countries of the Danube basin and South-Eastern Europe and with the history and the future of federation in that area.

The authors in each case give briefly the main historical facts, examine the trend of Russian policy towards the several neighbouring peoples and states, and attempt, sometimes confidently and sometimes tentatively, to base upon these foundations suggestions for the future resettlement of Eastern Europe. The subjects with which they have to deal again and again bristle with controversy, and facts, historical, ethnographical, and linguistic, often have to be excavated from beneath layers of ideological and nationalistic propaganda.

For instance, the innocent reader can hardly be expected to realise that when the authors write that "the linguistic differences between Russian, White Russian, and Ukrainian are hardly so great as between the three Scandinavian Languages," they are making a statement which will bring them the execrations of one camp and the embraces of another. In such overheated atmospheres no one can hope to remain completely cool; the authors maintain on the whole a creditable standard of accuracy and objectivity, though it must be said that they almost invariably give the benefit of any historical or political doubts to Russia. In general they present their facts and arguments concisely and clearly so that the ordinary reader should be able to understand what they have to say, but occasionally their exposition and arrangement are confusing, for instance in the chapters on federation.

The authors are wisely not dogmatic with regard to the settlement of Eastern Europe after the war or the redrawing of frontiers, though they do not hesitate to say on occasion what they regard as probable or desirable. The important thing is that they recognise the desirability (apart from the inevitability) of the dominant part which the U.S.S.R. should play in that settlement and the absolute necessity of real co-operation between Russia and ourselves if the settlement is to be durable and to make peace durable. It is possible that, if Professor Keeton and Dr. Schlesinger had written this book two years ago, their attitude to Russia would have been the same; it is certain that, if it had been, their voices would have been crying in a British wilderness. The last year has altered all that and to-day only a tiny minority will disagree with them about the U.S.S.R. That is one hopeful sign for the future, for there is no doubt that, as they themselves argue, nothing was more disastrous to the last peace settlement and to the years that followed it than the barring out of Russia by the Western Powers.

LEONARD WOOLF

Shakespeare's Country. By JOHN RUSSELL. *Batsford.* 10s. 6d.

Mr. John Russell is to be congratulated upon this exemplary "area-book." A reference to Gérard de Nerval in the first sentence excites the expectations of the polite reader, and in due course the author reveals a rare sensibility, a considerable erudition and a very nice choice of words. His subject is the architecture, landscape and history of the area stretching from Birmingham to Gloucester, from Rugby to Ledbury. His treatment is thorough, but he writes with particular and personal appreciation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A humorous and cosmopolitan dandyism gives character to the book and adds greatly to the reader's enjoyment. He refers, it is true, to Montpellier as a "marshy, archipelagan seashore town," thus achieving a crescendo of fallacy, but this is the only mistake we have detected. In fine, he excites a desire to visit immediately the sites so artfully evoked. This is the author's first book, and it promises a distinguished literary career. Unluckily the illustrations are calculated to exasperate everyone capable of appreciating the text. An absurdly high proportion of the subjects in which Mr. Russell interests us are not illustrated, but there is an excess of photographs of conventionally picturesque cottages, a number of dowdy and uninformative line-drawings, and three coloured reproductions of water-colours remarkable only for the decadence of their style. The publishers may have sought to conciliate one section of the public with the text, another with the illustrations. The result we fear, must be to exasperate both sections.

Food for the Future. By JOSEPHINE TERRY. *Duckworth.* 2s.

Miss Terry is an unprejudiced and ingenious cook. Her rules for cooking vegetables with very little water are so sensible that they should be universally adopted; her basic recipes for making sauces, thickening batters and so on are intelligent and her directions clear; while her suggestions for varying the use of these recipes show a practical knowledge of the kinds of makeshifts that people have to adopt to-day. She oes not make the mistake of assuming that the mateur cook has a wine cellar, a poultry farm, a arket garden and a friend round the corner. She dmits the present food situation and anticipates a orse one. She has a nice sly way of introducing e health-food element into her meals without being o nutty and raw about it. But this slyness occa onally develops into mere jollying along: you can't olly people into liking liver if they really dislike the avour, however exuberantly you ally it to garlic, nion, or bottle sauce. Nor does the cook gain nything by introducing makeshift dishes under *ordon Bleu* names. A dish of breadcrumbs, white auce and fish is delicious, but it is only lowering to the pirits to call it a soufflé. There is a more serious ult in these recipes—a certain insensitiveness to avour. Most things, even in wartime, have a flavour f their own which should be exploited, not indisriminately hotted up with chutney or curry powder r grocer's sauce. Even when a housewife is reduced doing without fresh herbs and onions a certain istinctiveness can be achieved. In families where ere are children the water in which orange peel has een soaked can be used and it makes an excellent asis for a fish sauce; anchovy sauce has an honoured lace in English cooking for use with stewed steak; apers improve savoury rice. But to use, as Miss erry does, anything to flavour anything, produces ooking that is awfully good the first time you taste , but very quickly palls. And it is rather shocking find so capable a cook saying: "It is only a highly ained gourmet who can tell a haddock from cod, ith his eyes closed."

rom **Thirty Years with Freud.** By THEODOR REIK. *Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Those who feel curious to discover what sort of a erson Freud really was will get very little satisfaction ut of Dr. Reik. They will still have to do the best ey can from the hints dropped by Freud himself—ot indeed in his highly discreet autobiography, but fragments scattered over his various clinical works. r. Reik expressly disclaims any biographical inentions: he merely offers us three or four chapters f personal reminiscences which, except for a few necdotes, throw less light upon Freud than upon the uthor's own attitude towards him. And that attitude, f loyalty and devotion with just a tinge of selfatisfaction, is not the best background for a life-like ortrait. The rest of the book contains a number of ssays upon literary and sociological topics—emroideries of moderate interest upon Freudian emes.

Week-end Competitions

No. 656

Set by Roger Marvell

After the deaths of eminent octogenarians, "A friend" often sends to the *Times* a personal appreciation, through the honeyed phrases of which one clearly perceives the disagreeable qualities of the deceased. A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for appreciations of this sort sent by friends of the Marquis of Steyne, Mr. Collins, Heathcliffe, Mr. Squeers, Mrs. Proudie, Sir Willoughby Patterne, Burlap, M. de Charlus, Costals, Scarlett O'Hara, Mrs. Miniver or Mr. Norris (who changed trains). Entries not to exceed 180 words, but several shots allowed.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, September 7th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

REPORT ON COMPETITION No. 653

Set by V. S. Pritchett

In their proofs printers frequently misspell a word in a way that fantastically alters or even reverses the original meaning. Excellent new words are thus coined. "Vicilised" may, for example, take the place of "civilised." The usual prizes are offered for the subtlest misprinted version of any well-known lines of English verse.

Report by V. S. Pritchett

There seemed to be two possible attitudes to the problem set by this competition: The Freudian, which gave us a sight of the witty indecency of the compositor's unconscious; and the Joycean, which revealed the verbal fantasies which his enraged or poetical mind is capable of. The Freudian was fairly easy. Many competitors jumped at:

> "Make me immoral with a kiss,"

and the R.A.F. (pretty well a squadron, I should say) replied with

> "Each man in his time pays many tarts."

Very good, but if you are going in for the simple *double entendre*, I think that Mr. M. Chapman's "Blake" is richer:

> "When the vices of children are had on the green"

or

> "How shall the summer a rise enjoy,
> Or the rummer fruits appear?"

In this category come L. E. J.'s Meredith:

> "Around the ancient track marched, nark on nark,
> The army of unalterable Law";

Stanley J. Sharpless's Pope:

> "Whate'er is best administered is bust";

or the Wordsworth:

> "Or hear old Triton blow his wretched horn."

Richard Pomfret's Yeats must surely have turned up in galleys and have made Cuchulain and Deidre turn up their eyes:

> "I will arise and go now and go to Innis—free."

Allan M. Laing hits upon an indubitable piece of unconscious in:

> "England, with all thy vaults, I love thee still";

and I still grin after many readings of G. H. L.'s

> "What is love? 'Tis not herfather."

But what of the Joycean inventions? Here Leslie Johnson, Pibwob, D. W. Barker, Frank Spooner, Guy Vaesen were the successes.

> "Thou are not so unkind
> As man's ginratitude"

introduces a useful word for alcoholic irritability.

Pibwob finds words for the nameless sentiments of cat lovers:

> "That best portion of a goodman's life
> His little maneless, unremembered cats
> Of-dinkness and of love."

And Leslie Johnson has hit upon the true horror of walking down a delightfully lonely road; also upon a new definition of liverish sulking. I suggest the prizes be divided between Leslie Johnson, G. H. L., Pibwob, D. W. Barker, who are quoted above; and that Guy Vaesen should come into the share-out for a few lines of his Jabberwocky:

> "Ho, to be in Negland
> Won that Paril's three,
> And however swake in Negland
> Sees, mose morning, ruanawe,
> That the wolest boughs and the burshwood shafe
> Round the lem-tree lobe are in tiny lafe,
> While the fachfinch sings on the rochrad bough
> In Negland—won!"

Will Sola N. Trefoil send her address, and "Longaville" his name and address.

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WOMAN wants 2 or 3 roomed furn. flat or share house, some service pref. Bloomsbury or Hampstead. Box E81.

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